

NAVY NEWS

Off-sale date: November 1, 2007

OCTOBER 2007

£1.40

STORM FORCE

**CLEARING UP AFTER
HURRICANE DEAN**

**'ONE HECK OF A JOB'
TRAINING IRAQ'S NAVY
AND MARINES**

**DEEDS TO OUTLIVE US
HEROICS IN THE FALKLANDS
AND AT PASSCHENDAELE**

THE White Ensign billows in the stiff Clyde breeze as the imposing black form of HMS Vengeance returns home to Faslane at the end of an intense period of training.

The Vanguard-class ballistic missile-carrying submarine has been conducting exercises in Scottish waters under the watchful gaze of teams from the Flag Officer Sea Training – the experts who determine whether a ship and her company are ready for active duty.

Vengeance is the youngest of the quartet of 'bombers' and recently completed the 300th deterrent patrol carried out by the Silent Service since round-the-clock missions by Polaris, and now Trident, boats began in 1969.

Picture: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald,
FRPU Clyde





Fleet Focus

THERE seems to be a distinctly Chinese flavour to naval goings-on this past month.

Not merely has the good ship **HMS Monmouth** been working with the People's Liberation Army Navy on the far side of the world (see page 8), but the far side of the world has also come to Pompey (see opposite).

The key commitment – “a tough campaign and a vital one,” in the words of the First Sea Lord – at present is Afghanistan, where the **Naval Strike Wing** and **40 Commando** are both deployed in the on-going war against the Taleban (see pages 6 and 7).

The other crucible of effort continues to be the Gulf, home to HM Ships **Richmond**, **Blyth**, **Ramsey** and **Enterprise**, Royal Fleet Auxiliaries **Sir Bedivere** and **Bayleaf**, and the mentors of the **Naval Transition Team**.

The NaTT and Sir Bedivere are overseeing the development of the Iraqi Navy and Marines (see pages 14 and 15), Blyth has been training the Bahraini navy (see right), Ramsey has been blowing up mines with the Americans (see page 41), and **HMS Cornwall's** eventful time in the region has finally ended with her return to Devonport (see page 4).

Away from the Gulf, **HMS Northumberland** has assumed anti-terror duties in the Mediterranean with NATO (see page 5).

Assault ship **HMS Albion** paid her second visit to Denmark of the summer, this time calling in at Copenhagen to return a Napoleonic-era bell to its rightful owners (see page 32) before sailing to take part in disaster relief exercises with Allied navies (see page 11).

Few, if any ships as a unit, are busier than the **Fishery Protection Squadron**, whose recent activities are championed on page 13. Although a minehunter by design, **HMS Quorn** is a fishery boat by trade presently; she collected a trophy for her sterling efforts (see right).

New patrol ship **HMS Clyde** should, by the time you read this, be steaming around the Falklands; she stopped off in Rio on her way south to take part in a Brazilian Fleet Review (see page 41). **HMS Southampton** has also visited Brazil for a brief spell of maintenance before return to the Falklands (see page 4).

In home waters, HM Ships **Bangor** and **Lancaster** were on hand when a Russian warship visited the Clyde to remember heroics in the Russo-Japanese war (see page 4).

Our ship of the month (see page 12) **HMS Somerset** could be found in the River Dart for the 163rd Royal Regatta as the event's guardship (see page 19), while **HMS Liverpool** paid her first visit since a refit to the Mersey city which carries the same name (see page 32).

For those in peril around the UK, the Search and Rescue Sea Kings of **771 NAS** and **HMS Gannet Flight** have been guardian angels during an extremely busy summer (see page 7).

And finally, hats off to the men and women of **HMS Portland** and **RFA Wave Ruler**. Having chased Hurricane Dean around the Caribbean for several days, the sailors of both ships were called upon in Belize to help locals re-build their homes after the storm finally struck land in force (see centre pages).



● This is what they looked like before the tot... **HMS Quorn's** ship's company celebrate winning the Soberton Trophy

Sober-ing times on Quorn

RUM barrels on British warships aren't quite as rare as you might think these days.

The daily tot may have been scrapped in 1970, but twice in the past four years senior officers have trotted aboard **HMS Quorn** to hand over a barrel of rum to her ship's company.

Sadly, said barrel is devoid of rum. It is, however, filled with gratitude for the ship's fishery protection achievements.

The barrel – better known as the Soberton Trophy – is presented to the Hunt-class warship which has made the most outstanding contribution to fishery duties in the past 12 months.

It's a trophy the ship previously collected in 2003. She returned to fishery protection work last September, giving up her 'day job' of mine warfare to bolster the Fishery Protection Squadron.

In nine months, her sailors conducted more than 90 boardings of trawlers in and around UK waters, admonishing several fishermen for breaches of the law, and detaining three vessels for more serious transgressions.

The citation for the award praises Quorn's “utmost flexibility”. It continues:

“**HMS Quorn** has fulfilled her duties to the Squadron, the Royal Navy, the Marine and Fisheries Agency and to the community at large with professionalism, self-belief and utmost determination. Strongly led, the high standards that she has set are a testament to the degree of teamwork, knowledge and



resilience displayed by her ship's company.”

And despite the Soberton Trophy containing not a drop of rum, Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Andrew Cameron and the ship's company toasted the occasion with a tot of Pusser's Rum – fittingly in a Pusser's Rum tin mug.

Not content with ‘doing fish’, the ship has continued with her core role: finding and disposing of mines. Just hours after receiving the trophy, the ship sailed for a week of mine warfare training around the Solent.

And then it was back to fish. After issuing various verbal warnings to fishermen infringing the rules in a lumpy North Sea (it was, after all, high summer), Quorn headed for the Cornish port of Fowey for its Royal Regatta.

The ship opened her gangway to 800 visitors, while the sailors were out and about in Fowey.

Some attended the regatta's church service, others enjoyed a concert by the St Columba Cornish Male Voice Choir.

Other music was provided by the Band of HM Royal Marines Dartmouth, who staged a Falklands 25th anniversary concert, while Quorn's sailors conducted a sunset ceremony in Place House, Fowey's 15th-Century tower.

And the sailors were on the streets of the town collecting cash during the regatta carnival, while CO Lt Cdr Matt Bowden was a guest at the crowning of the carnival queen.

Blyth turn the tables

NORMALLY it's the good folk of **HMS Blyth** tackling fires, grappling with machinery breakdowns and coping with floods – all at the hands of instructors from the Flag Officer Sea Training.

The boot was on the other foot for the minehunter's crew, however, when Blyth was joined by sailors from the Bahrain Defence Force.

Now it was the Bahrainis' ‘good’ fortune to cope with fire, plague, pestilence and flood (well, the fire and flood bit at any rate) as Blyth's crew created havoc.

The Bahraini sailors spent a fortnight aboard the Sandown-class ship while Blyth's sailors shared their knowledge and expertise of coping with crises at sea.

The training for the Bahrainis came hot on the heels of a similar package offered to the Royal Navy of Oman, which Blyth provided with her sister **HMS Ramsey**, the other half of the Operation Aintree task force.

The Bahrain sailors were taken through a number of different stances, watching demonstrations of man-overboard and seamanship drills and the Special Sea Dutyman organisation as the ship conducted the pilotage out of Bahrain, to a patrol area a few miles off the coast.

As well as watching Blyth's sailors at work, the Bahrainis had a tour of the ship and witnessed the incredible manoeuvrability of Blyth; she can pirouette on the spot whilst under way at maximum speed – a feat only possible in Sandown-class vessels thanks to their unique propulsion system.

To mark the end of the training support package, the visitors were presented with commemorative certificates by the UK Maritime Component Commander, based in Bahrain, Cdre Keith Winstanley.

“Interaction like this may look like a small commitment, but it really is so important,” the commodore added.

“The influence it has and the good standing we have as a consequence with the Bahrainis is almost immeasurable.”

Blyth and Ramsey are deployed to the Gulf on mine counter-measure and survey operations until 2009, with their crews being rotated via the rest of the Sandown fleet.

Red dawn



NO, THIS is not the dawning of the apocalypse.

Instead, it's an impressive (and arty) shot – by LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher, FRPU Whale Island – of the Chinese support ship Wei Shanhu entering Portsmouth Harbour at the start of a four-day official visit to the UK.

It's the first time in six years that vessels from the People's Republic of China have called in on Portsmouth Naval Base.

Wei Shanhu is the trusty aide of guided missile destroyer Guangzhou, which has been touring Europe since leaving home at Sanya in China's Hainan Province in late July.

The duo had already called in at St Petersburg and Cadiz before arriving in the Solent, a journey, so far, of 12,000 miles.

Greeting the ships were the saluting guns of Fort Blockhouse in Gosport and, once alongside at South Railway Jetty, around 400 members of the Chinese community in Britain, plus China's Ambassador to the UK Fu Yung, and Cdre Andrew Cameron, Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla. There was also a suitably colourful display by a Chinese dragon.

A mixture of official visits, sporting activities and entertainment were lined up for the 500 Chinese sailors during

their four-day stay in Portsmouth.

Task group commander Rear Admiral Su Zhiqian and his team were given a VIP tour of HMS Victory and NATO flagship HMS Ark Royal, while 30 of his sailors performed two concerts in the Victory Arena.

The Chinese sailors also toured HMS Collingwood and, on the sporting front, challenged HMS Illustrious to a football match at HMS Temeraire.

There was, of course, time for fun too. The RN provided information packs, translated into Mandarin for the 500 Chinese sailors, giving them an idea of some of the local attractions, pubs and restaurants (most of the visitors

seemed to gravitate towards Gunwharf Quays).

Coaches were also laid on to take the Chinese sailors to the capital to catch the sights of the big city.

With the four-day stay done, the two ships departed Portsmouth accompanied by HMS Ark Royal for an exercise with the flat-top.

Ark hosted a delegation of Chinese, keen to learn about carrier operations (China possesses no flat-top presently but has a partially-built carrier).

The three vessels carried out a mock search and rescue mission in the Channel, sending first aid and fire-fighting teams in seaboats to help a

'stricken' merchant vessel (aka the Wei Shanhu).

With the 'emergency' mastered, the three ships formed up line astern, before the Chinese vessels steamed past Ark at high speed, their sailors lining the decks as the two navies saluted each other.

The Chinese duo continued their *grande tour* upon leaving British waters, heading first for France, then on to Cadiz again before returning to the Far East.

As for Ark, she could be found conducting amphibious exercises off Browdown beach in Gosport as *Navy News* went to press.



Pennies from Severn for Newport

FISHERY protection ship HMS Severn broke off from her usual duties to spend five days in her affiliated city.

The ship is bonded with the Welsh port of Newport and despite her relatively short career, events involving cityfolk and the ship's company are already annual affairs.

And that includes the opener of this visit... the junior rates' social – a party “very well received”, so we're told, by locals.

The down side of said social was the impact it had on the ship's football team, who trotted out for their annual fixture against the civic council team somewhat the worse for wear – and promptly lost 11-1.


Several sailors plus CO Lt Cdr Graham Lovatt headed to TS Resolute, the city's Sea Cadet unit, to watch a first-class display of drill and PT – particularly impressive as the unit has suffered a spate of burglaries and attacks by vandals (as reported in these pages) in recent months.

To help the cadets get back on their feet, Lt Cdr Lovatt handed over £560, raised by sponsoring the ship's deputy marine engineer officer WO Dave Mantel for completing the London Marathon.

Severn arrived in Newport on the eve of the city's civic weekend festivities, and helped open the event by hosting a reception aboard.

That was followed by the first chance for the sailors to exercise their freedom of the city awarded last year, marching to St Woolos Cathedral.

The visit also allowed the ship to adopt the mayor's charity for its next 12 months of fundraising: Just One Child, which helps abandoned children in South Africa suffering from HIV and AIDS.

 Fishery protection round-up, page 13

Santos' big helpers

THE Saints left the chilly waters of the Falklands behind for eight days in the Brazilian port and resort of Santos, a short distance from its largest city of Sao Paolo.

The spell in Santos allowed engineers to carry out some maintenance on the destroyer, four months into her South Atlantic deployment.

And while their ship was receiving a 'service', her sailors mingled with the Santos community.

Footballers challenged local armed forces sides to matches, while the more adventurous donned scuba gear for a spot of diving.

The most moving – and enjoyable – aspect of the visit, however, was the chance to host 20 youngsters with special needs from the Lar Mae Do Divino Amor hostel.

The children were given a tour of Southampton before the big-hearted sailors threw a party for their guests on the flight deck.

There was another spell of maintenance once the destroyer returned to East Cove, her home from home while based around the Falklands.

And that permitted yet more off-ship activities for her sailors. Two groups spent a week with the adventurous training centre in Stanley, kayaking, fishing, mountain biking and clay pigeon shooting. Their shipmates were also active; many used the spell alongside to pass the RN fitness test.

Maintenance complete, Southampton resumed her duties, joining tanker RFA Gold Rover and islands' guardship HMS Dumbarton Castle for a series of joint exercises.

Ice cream Sunday



● HMS Cornwall passes Drake's Island at the end of her Gulf deployment

AH, SUNDAY mornings.

A leisurely perusal of the paper and its countless supplements.

A stroll with the dog on the common.

A moment for reflection in a house of worship.

A hearty welcome for the men and women of the Fleet after 216 days and 29,000 miles from home.

Okay, so the latter image does not normally leap into your head, but on a glorious late summer Sunday morning HMS Cornwall arrived safely back in Devonport after an eventful trip to the Gulf.

To the outside world the deployment will mostly be remembered for the capture

of Cornwall's RN/RM boarding party by Iranian Revolutionary Guards in March and the subsequent media meltdown.

Away from the “media glare”, however, Commanding Officer Cdr Jeremy Woods said his ship and her men and women had achieved “a great deal indeed”.

The Type 22 frigate served as the flagship of Cdre Nick Lambert and his RN team currently heading Task Force 158 which enforces security in and around Iraqi waters.



The ‘ice cream frigate’ (her pennant number is F99) spent most her time in a two-mile radius of the two Iraqi oil terminals which fill waiting tankers with black gold.

During F99's spell in the northern Gulf more than 200 million barrels of crude oil (worth more than £5bn) were safely exported via the terminals.

Cornwall worked with 26 different ships from Allied nations during her Gulf tour of duty.

For every six dhows, tugs, tankers, fishing vessels or other

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow, FRPU West

craft bobbing around the northern Gulf, Cornwall's boarding parties inspected at least one – that meant 327 boardings in all.

“I am proud of the way all my people conducted themselves and delighted with the manner in which they tackled this busy and challenging deployment,” Cdr Woods added.

“Every single member of our close-knit team has turned their hands to a multitude of tasks, and they have completed them most professionally and in a timely manner.

“We've received numerous messages of support from families, friends and our many affiliates – and for this I thank them all.”

Flare from Pursuer

SAILORS from the Cyprus squadron rescued local fishermen when their boat was in danger of foundering near Akrotiri.

HMS Pursuer – which with sister HMS Dasher comprises the squadron – came to the aid as darkness shrouded nearby Cape Zevgari, where fishing vessel Seafighter3 was in danger of sinking.

Pursuer's duty Commanding Officer Lt Matt Marriott said it was a tricky rescue for the P2000's crew, who worked with a passing vessel, Explorer, to locate the struggling Seafighter3.

Parachute flares raced into the night sky to illuminate the sea and once Pursuer had located the fishing vessel, she sent a boarding team led by CPO John Rowley across in a RIB.

“There was a difficult and chaotic surf which was creating problems as it broke on to the rocks around the Seafighter3,” said Lt Marriott.

The senior rating was nevertheless able to board the fishing boat and judge that it could be saved.

He attached a tow line from the RIB and began to drag Seafighter3 off the rocks, before Pursuer took over and towed the craft to Akrotiri Mole, where the rescued crew received medical check-ups.

“This was a challenging, difficult operation in dark, under potentially dangerous conditions,” said Lt Marriott. “I am proud of my ship's company's response.”

Sabre-rattling by Bulwark

ASSAULT ship HMS Bulwark is part-way through seven weeks of operational training – the final tick in the box at the end of an overhaul.

Seven weeks of intensive training and exercises began in the waters of Devon and Cornwall last month, overseen by the experts from the Flag Officer Sea Training.

While much of the training for the Devonport-based warship is generic to the Fleet – fire-fighting and damage-control exercises, fending off air attacks and the like – the final two weeks of the work-up are tailored specifically to the needs and challenges of amphibious warfare.

The training culminates with a fortnight of amphibious raids and assaults upon the Devon coast – Exercise South West Sabre – undertaken by Bulwark and the 200 Royal Marines of 42 Commando from Bickleigh who will embark in the assault ship.

Cumberland is fit 4C

COMING to the end of an extensive overhaul in her native Devonport, Type 22 frigate HMS Cumberland has been crammed with IT wizardry.

Computer experts have vastly enhanced the existing network of NavyStar – the standard intranet system in the Fleet – in Cumberland, doubling the number of places it can be accessed aboard.

NavyStar – the latest variant is version 4C – grants sailors access to e-mail and a vast information database.

The Information-Technology work aboard Cumberland has also seen a new ‘secret’ network installed – but to power the improved NavyStar and ‘secret’ network, engineers have also had to enhance the frigate's existing 115-volt power supply system to cope with the extra demand.

Cumberland is due to emerge from refit later this autumn. Other work carried out on the frigate includes improved satellite communications, water-processing plants and a new torpedo defence system.

Tributes from the Ayr force



TWO RN vessels were on hand to help Russian sailors commemorate one of their navy's greatest ships.

The cruiser Varyag foundered off the Ayrshire coast near Girvan in 1920 as she made her way to a breaker's yard.

That brought an end to a remarkable career – but not the legend of the Varyag.

The ship sailed into immortality during the Russo-Japanese war.

Ordered to surrender when vastly superior Japanese forces surrounded the Russian fleet in the Korean port of Chemulpo (today Incheon), Varyag chose to fight.

The decision cost 130 Russian sailors their lives, but still the Japanese did not sink the cruiser; it was left to her crew to scuttle her.

The Japanese subsequently raised her, put her back into service and eventually handed the Varyag back to the Russians.

The cruiser was sent to Britain for a refit before she could be pressed into service by the Tsar's navy – but revolution subsequently consumed Russia and the Varyag was forgotten.

And so in 1920 she was sold to the Germans to break up – but she struck rocks

off the Ayrshire village of Lendalfoot, finally disappearing beneath the waters five years later.

The Russians unveiled a memorial to the ship 12 months ago, and this year sent their anti-submarine destroyer RFS Severomorsk to the Clyde to pay its respects.

HMS Lancaster shepherded the Russian warship, part of her Northern Fleet, in UK waters, while minehunter HMS Bangor – which was present at ceremonies last year – hosted the Severomorsk throughout her stay on the Clyde, as pictured above.

Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, FRPU North

Overhaul for HMS Ocean

THERE'S feverish activity surrounding Britain's biggest warship – but not involving her crew.

HMS Ocean is out of action for the next 12 months as she undergoes a £30m overhaul in her home base of Devonport.

In the first nine years of her life, the helicopter assault ship has been heavily in demand, playing key roles in Sierra Leone and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Most recently Ocean took the fight to drug-runners in the Caribbean.

All that action, however, has taken its toll on the ship and some TLC is now needed, courtesy of Devonport support firm DML.

Beyond generally giving Ocean's machinery and combat systems a revamp, the DML team will also improve the accommodation areas, particularly for the embarked force of Royal Marines (the ship can carry up to 800 commandos prior to an amphibious assault) – including providing mess desks for the green berets.

The galley and food storage areas will be given a makeover, there will be better facilities for storing troops' kit, and on the aviation side of things, enhancements will allow Ocean to better operate the Army's Apache attack helicopters.

Following extensive sea trials Ocean is due to return to the Fleet in September 2008. Her role in the meantime will be performed by HMS Ark Royal, whose recent refit was designed to prepare her for the commando assault role rather than as a traditional Harrier carrier.



● HMS Northumberland's Merlin races over silvery seas

Picture: LA(Phot) Darren Macdonald

Northumberland is still Standing

TWO days after summer leave, the men and women of HMS Northumberland joined the war against terrorism.

The Devonport-based Type 23 frigate left the south-west behind and is now bound for the Mediterranean to take up station with NATO's 2nd Standing Naval Group Mediterranean.

NATO has run Operation Active Endeavour continually since the September 11 2001 atrocities, hoping to snare terrorists, fundamentalists, people and drug traffickers and other criminals using the sea lanes of the Mediterranean.

Much of 2007 has been spent in home waters, although the frigate did head to Gibraltar for training then hopped across the Straits to Algeria, before returning to Blighty for an engine change, new kit, and a fortnight of intensive pre-deployment training from those nice chaps at the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation.

The bulk of her Active Endeavour work will be conducted in the eastern Mediterranean where Northumberland and fellow Allied warships will interrogate

passing merchant vessels and board any should suspicions not be allayed.

As of mid-September, the group NATO force comprised Northumberland, Bulgarian frigate Draski, ITS Aliseo, SPS Cananis, HS Aegean, flagship Turkey's TG Orocreis and the Spanish tanker Marquise de la Ensenada providing logistical support.

The first few days of the deployment were spent 'gelling' to ensure the multinational force could operate safely and effectively as one.

And that meant trying to sink Northumberland. A lot. AV8B Harriers and Tornados were thrown at the British warship.

Northumberland did, however,

not simply sit on the defensive.

Her boarding team and Merlin helicopter, both of which are at the forefront of the NATO mission, were called on day and night to conduct missions.

After the warm-up exercises, the sufficiently-honed force put into La Spezia for three days' rest (which for the Northumberland sailors either meant the beach or, for the more historically minded, Pisa and Florence).

"There is an enormously-exciting time ahead for Northumberland," said CO Cdr Martin Simpson, who has recently taken charge of the ship from Cdr Tom Guy.

"I have inherited an enthusiastic ship's company and I'm sure their thoroughly-deserved reputation for professionalism will serve them well during our autumn deployment."



● Do not adjust your set... Lt Cdr Ben Dickens, Westminister's PWO(U), kisses the Blarney Stone

The topsy-turvy world of HMS Westminister

HANGING upside down over a 120ft precipitous drop to kiss a block of stone is not normal.

Unless you're in Eire, you're a sailor and you're visiting Castle Blarney.

The legendary Blarney Stone is supposed to give those who kiss it the gift of the gab.

Some might argue that many of HMS Westminister's sailors already possess that 'gift'... but they kissed the stone anyway.

The Westminister team visited the castle and other sights in the Republic of Ireland when their ship paid a short visit to Cork.

The frigate berthed at North Customs House Quay and once official duties were dispensed with – there was a reception for around 100 local dignitaries, including Cork's RNA and Royal British Legion, the sailors dispersed around County Cork to catch the sights.

Strangely, many seemed to gravitate towards the Jameson whiskey distillery (the tasting room was especially popular). More sobering, in more ways

than one, was a visit to Cobh, one-time RN base and today home of the Irish Navy. It was also the last port of call for the Titanic on her ill-fated maiden voyage.

Also of a historical nature was Cork County Cricket ground, built by the Royal Engineers in the 1870s.

It saw the first outing for Westminister's cricket team (the ship has never fielded an 11-strong side before) against the Irish Navy. The hosts posted 91-5 off 30 overs; the visitors fell short of the target by 21, all out for 70.

The locals couldn't muster a football side, so Westminister's over 30s took on her under 30s; age triumphed over youth 5-4.

Upon leaving Cork, the frigate headed for the Clyde and the multinational naval force mustering for Neptune Warrior (see above right).

The remainder of the year will be spent in home waters honing training before Westminister departs on the Marstrike08 deployment in the new year with HMS Illustrious, heading east of Suez.

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'Delivering in spades'

NAVAL aviators hold the right of the line in the skies of Afghanistan, providing the aerial punch against the Taliban.

The Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing have deployed to Kandahar air base until February to give direct support to Allied ground troops grappling with fundamentalist insurgents.

The burden falls upon eight jets, their pilots, and the 120 men and women who stand behind them.

At every hour of every day, the bomber variants of the fabled jump jet will be expected to wade in against the enemy should the men on the ground demand it.

Although the jets and the men in them are Brits, the troops on the ground are drawn from all nationalities.

"We want to beat the drum. The flag will be flying and we will deliver for the guys on the ground," said Cdr Kev Seymour, Commanding Officer of the Naval Strike Wing.

"Whether we're dark blue or light blue, it doesn't matter to the troops. The important thing is that we can do the job just as well as the RAF."

This is the first combat deployment for the Strike Wing – comprising 800 and 801 Naval Air Squadrons – based at RAF Cottesmore in Rutland.

The wing spent the final fortnight before deploying conducting a strenuous series of training missions, chiefly honing their night-flying skills.

In a pep talk to thank the Strike Wing for its continuing efforts ahead of its return to Afghanistan, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band praised the team.

"This force, these aircraft, you people have delivered in spades," he stressed.

"There is no other force that can do what you do."

The wing takes over from the RAF; the jets themselves remained in theatre, while the Strike Wing personnel flew out from the UK to take over responsibility for them.

For typical sorties, pilots will be airborne for four to five hours at a time, using tankers to refuel in-flight, intervening on the ground with rockets and bombs when required.

A rapid reaction Harrier will

also be on the tarmac at Kandahar, ready to scramble in a flash should an emergency flare up.

Typically, a jump jet can cover the distance between Kandahar and the Helmand provincial town of Garmsir in around 15 minutes.

The Harriers are a mix of GR7 and GR9s; the latter has improved avionics and weaponry, although outwardly the jets appear almost identical.

As well as improved guided bombs being available for this deployment, one crucial new piece of kit is the 'Sniper Pod' video and targeting system.

The pod system beams live TV images of the ground on to a display in the cockpit – and also back to headquarters.

It means the fighter controllers directing the aerial battle have a pilot's eye view of events – and might spot something the flier has missed. The footage can also be saved for more detailed analysis.

And that might take some time: from a range of three to four miles, it's possible to make out individual people moving around so good is the Sniper Pod.

The improved kit should mean enhanced support for the ground forces, who were full of gratitude for Fleet Air Arm support 12 months ago when naval jets last deployed to Kandahar.

"The fighter controllers of 3 Commando Brigade could not praise the support of our naval guys in the air too much last year," said Capt Jon White RM.

He deploys to Afghanistan as a ground forces liaison officer, a vital link between the troops in the front line – be they Dutch, Canadian or the Brits of 52 Brigade and their 'jewel in the crown', 40 Commando (*see opposite*) – and the Naval Strike Wing.

"Last year's deployment rejuvenated the importance of air power," Capt White added.

"Close air support was key to the mission."

"If you have troops in contact with the enemy, and our jets come roaring over the enemy's heads, it's a massive lift for the troops."

... And it probably scares the pants off the insurgents.

Such missions place huge demands on the operations team and the pilots.

The key, says Cdr Seymour, "is to get the aircraft off the ground first time, every time."

And so for the engineers,



● Naval Strike Wing CO Cdr Kev Seymour and First Sea Lord Admiral Jonathon Band discuss the Afghanistan deployment

Picture: LA(Phot) Des Wade, Naval Strike Wing

electricians and bombheads, the working regime at Kandahar will be no less demanding.

Many of the wing have been to Afghanistan before, but some have not; by the end of the deployment, most of the formation will have been rotated through Kandahar.

They are expected to ensure six of the eight Harriers in theatre are ready for action at any given moment.

That means shifts of 12 hours on, 12 hours off, with a switch-over every ten days to provide a little extra rest.

Such shifts would be demanding enough in themselves... but then you throw the Afghan environment into the melting pot...

"Maintenance is not an easy task even back here, but out there it's a lot more difficult," says Lt Stephen Offord, Deputy Air Engineer Officer.

LAET Rob Hunt was in Kandahar two years ago supporting RAF 3 Sqn when facilities at the airbase were rather more, shall we say, 'rudimentary'.

"We didn't have the facilities we have now," he says. "We had the billy basics."

"The working area tents were infested with vermin and spiders – you had to carry a torch with you at night just in case."

In the height of summer, mechanics kept tools in buckets of water and,

despite the best efforts of the team, the Afghan dust created mini sand dunes in the open Harrier cockpits.

Oh, and the hard standing needed repairing almost daily.

Still, mustn't grumble...

The infrastructure now at Kandahar is much improved; two 'clam shells' protect man and machine from the elements for some of the more demanding maintenance jobs, alongside six more traditional shelters for the jump jets.

And for the men and women of the Strike Wing, there are most, if not all, mod cons: satellite TV, a cinema, internet access, even a Burger King and Dunkin' Donuts.

Creature comforts take second place to the mission: this is a matter of life and death.

"If a jet is unserviceable here at Cottesmore, then you miss out on a training sortie," said Lt Offord.

"If you miss a sortie out in Afghanistan, there can be trouble."

The four-and-a-half-month deployment to Kandahar raises the curtain on 13 months of frantic activity by the Strike Wing.

Upon returning from Afghanistan in February, the fliers enjoy a brief period of leave before joining HMS Illustrious for a deployment east of Suez.

After that it's back to Blighty, before a return to Kandahar in the summer.

The story so far...

2007 has been an eventful year for the Fleet Air Arm's fast jet community. The Naval Strike Wing, NSW was officially formed on the 9th March 2007, in a ceremony attended by the Second Sea Lord, readily accepting its new identity and taking its place as a front line unit alongside its RAF counterparts, 1 (F) Sqn and 4 (AC) Sqn as part of Joint Force Harrier.



Since then, NSW has been particularly active, taking part in several high profile exercises, both afloat and ashore, and preparing itself for the challenges of Afghanistan.

In April, the wing embarked in HMS Illustrious for a Neptune Warrior exercise in the North Sea, before Illustrious and her attendant air group ventured into the Baltic, taking part in major NATO war games, Noble Mariner. The Harriers parted company with the carrier in Estonia.

June saw the Naval Strike Wing back at RAF Cottesmore, and once again engrossed on the business of aircrew training, an activity supported by the engineering team who worked hard to ensure sufficient aircraft were available to meet the task.

Essentially a strike aircraft, the Harrier's main role is close air support, which means numerous training sorties flown against various targets throughout the UK, including some range work with live weapons.

In addition to training, time was also set aside for the Strike Wing's aircraft to participate in several high-profile events, including the fly-past to commemorate the Falklands victory, and appearances at various air shows, including Yeovilton Air Day.

Mindful of forthcoming operations, the last few months have seen the focus move towards preparation for deployment.

For the aircrew this has meant refining a variety of aerial skills, and attending specialist briefings and practical courses.

The engineering and operations teams have also undertaken additional training, mostly centred on the learning and application of military knowledge to prepare for operations in a challenging environment. Overseen by the RAF Regiment, these courses have been both rigorous and informative, and when combined with the naval sense of humour, have allowed the wing to handle most things...

Although predominantly RN in composition, the wing does include a percentage of RAF personnel – and one Royal Marine (in the form of Capt Jon White, the Ground Liaison Officer). The usual inter-service banter is readily apparent, but is good-natured, and underpinned by a desire to perform well as a team; the naval character of the unit remains apparent though, with a White Ensign flying proudly outside the wing's hangar.

As the autumn 'term' commences Naval Strike Wing is in excellent shape – and looking forward to the forthcoming challenges.

Continuation's what you need

SEARCHES for missing divers invariably have unhappy endings. So we can report good tidings from HMS Nottingham whose hunt for a frogman ended successfully.

The ship was readying herself for Directed Continuation Training – top-up instruction from the Flag Officer Sea Training before a major deployment – when she received a distress call from Brixham Coastguard.

The dive vessel Black and Blue reported a diver overdue from a visit to the wreck of the merchantman Manor, off Berry Head.

Lifeboats were scrambled, so too a helicopter training with RFA Argus, while Nottingham was also asked to scour the Devon seas.

The diver thankfully reappeared about 2½ miles from the spot where he went down and was picked up by a passing vessel.

As for Nottingham, she went through her two weeks of DCT as planned, where the FOSTies concentrated on fire-fighting, damage control and 'warfighting' expertise.

The Portsmouth destroyer is working her way up towards a South Atlantic deployment later this autumn, when she sails to the Falklands to relieve her sister Southampton.

Crazy gang on Cattistock

THE latest piece of kit in the arsenal of mine warfare specialists continues to be put through its paces around the UK.

SeaFox is replacing the existing 'yellow submarines' used by Sandown and Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessels to dispose of underwater explosive devices.

When a ship discovers a suspicious object on the sea bed, SeaFox is launched to find, identify and destroy the mine (it also destroys itself in the process).

HMS Cattistock has been testing the new device – it rather looks like a stumpy torpedo with smaller torpedoes fixed to its hull – throughout the spring and summer.

The latest series of tests were conducted around the Isle of Skye and Kyle of Lochalsh before the Hunt-class ship returned to her native Portsmouth.

There her ship's company prepared to hand over the keys to Cattistock to the men of the 'Crazy A'.

As part of the ongoing 'sea swap' initiative intended to keep RN vessels in operational theatres longer, HMS Atherstone's crew are taking over the ship... and Cattistock's sailors in turn will look after the Crazy A.

Golden autumn beckons

THREE warships, one auxiliary and Merlins of 700M NAS lead Britain's input in a rapid-fire NATO exercise off the Croatian coast this month.

Strike carrier HMS Illustrious provides the punch (courtesy of half a dozen Spanish AV8B jump jets), escorted by HMS York and HMS Chatham and supported by RFA Fort George.

France, the USA, Spain, Italy and Romania are also throwing vessels into the melting pot of Exercise Noble Midas, which runs for three weeks, close to Split.

The aim of the war game is to test the force's reaction to attacks from land, sea and air.

There's a busy autumn programme for Lusty; barely is she back from the Adriatic than she's steaming around the North Sea next month, practising with Joint Force Harrier.

● Rescue 708 of HMS Gannet races low over the hilly Scottish terrain

Picture: WO1 Ian Arthur, FRPU Clyde



Bad summer = busy summer

THE poor summer did not deter holidaymakers from hitting the beaches and coastal waters... promptly ensuring a busy summer for the Fleet Air Arm's two rescue units.

Both 771 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose, and HMS Gannet Search and Rescue Flight, based at Prestwick, saw sorties reach their peak over the summer months.

The Culdrose Sea Kings have been called out 182 times (as of the end of August) – up 24 on 2006. August has been the busiest

month to date – and missing divers accounted for one in six of the call-outs.

Both the Gannet and Culdrose SAR helicopters are at 15 minutes' notice to scramble by day and 45 minutes by night.

They invariably beat that time, but few rescues are perhaps as quick as that performed by 771 when a woman was washed into Mounts Bay when a wave crashed against the sea wall at Porthleven, a stone's throw from Culdrose.

Within a dozen minutes, the 771 fliers had safely recovered the

lady and lowered her back on to dry land – the quickest rescue in recent history.

"Despite the bad weather this summer, we've still had many holidaymakers enjoying the Cornish coast, swimming in the sea and taking part in various water sports," said Lt Cdr Chris Godwin, Commanding Officer of 771 NAS.

"This has resulted in a much busier summer than last year for the squadron."

North of the border, the Gannet team have been scrambled

244 times this year, with call-outs climaxing between June and August (roughly 37 missions each month).

We recounted the (rather amusing) tale of a stranded bull earlier this summer.

Most of the Gannet rescues have, of course, been rather more serious: chiefly searches for missing walkers (or winching injured ones to safety), divers with the bends, injured sailors, pregnant women going into labour prematurely, and someone who got stuck on a weir in the middle of a river.

Afghan life begins at 40

THE task of quashing the Taleban in northern Helmand for the next six months rests upon the shoulders of several hundred Royal Marine Commandos.

The green berets of 40 Commando, based outside Taunton, have relieved their Army comrades in the Royal Anglians as part of the six-monthly roulement of British forces in Afghanistan.

40 Cdo did not deploy last year when the bulk of 3 Commando Brigade headed to Helmand (and the brigade returns to Afghanistan in force again next autumn).

Instead, the Somerset Royals have been fulfilling the Corps' amphibious role off West Africa and in the Baltic, as well as conducting live-fire training



in Britain and Denmark, and exercises alongside the troops of 52 Brigade who will lead the six-month deployment.

The commandos have also been learning the lingo and have been taught about the culture of the country in which they are now serving.

Like their aerial comrades in the Naval Strike Wing, 40 Cdo – the 'jewel in the crown' of 52 Bde, as one Royal dubbed them (*see opposite*) – received a visit from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band on the eve of their departure from Somerset.

And like their Corps comrades, 40 Cdo will set up base in Camp Bastion, the British headquarters in Helmand, but elements of the commando will be scattered throughout the north of the province.

Evolution not revolution

THE Navy's vital auxiliary fleet will largely remain as it is, senior officers have ruled after a two-year review.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary – which operates repair vessels, tankers, training ships and floating warehouses to support the RN's global operations – has found itself increasingly fulfilling front-line roles in recent years.

Auxiliaries can currently be found conducting anti-drug operations in the Caribbean (RFA Wave Ruler) and serving as a mother ship for Iraqi Navy trainees in the Gulf (RFA Sir Bedivere).

Such roles are very different from the ones the fleet carried out two decades ago – and prompted senior officials at Fleet Headquarters in Portsmouth to look at the long-term future of the RFA.

Six options for the future

auxiliary fleet were considered by top brass: do nothing; use a commercial support fleet; use a mix of commercial/RN/RFA; bring some of the RFA Fleet into the RN, notably the Bay-class landing support ships; bring the RFA entirely under RN control and manning; or go for an evolved RFA.

The Navy Board has decided that the RFA – founded in 1905 – should remain a separate service and should 'evolve', with RFA practices increasingly mirroring those in the Senior Service; wherever possible, training for RFA sailors will take place alongside their RN counterparts.

The 'Evolved RFA' idea has now been endorsed by the Navy Board but a lot more work is required as Fleet HQ looks to plan for an 'afloat support fleet' which will be capable of meeting the needs of

the Royal Navy of 2020.

Maritime trade unions and all the RFA's personnel will be consulted about any future changes to the auxiliary fleet's structure.

Students set an Example

UNIVERSITY boat HMS Example left her native Tyne behind to sample the bright lights of London, Dieppe and Bruges during a busy summer deployment.

The craft, normally based at HMS Calliope in Gateshead, serves the Northumbrian University Royal Naval Unit – using the students' summer leave to take them to sea.

This year that deployment took the boat into the Channel and North Sea.

The highlight of the summer was undoubtedly a three-day visit to London in company with six other P2000 patrol boats.

London has been just one of ten cities visited by Example during a hectic few weeks; stops in Dieppe, Brugge and Scheveningen (The Netherlands) were particularly memorable.

The majority of the deployment was spent in company with other URNUs – in particular HMS Explorer (Yorkshire) and HMS Archer (Aberdeen) – which allowed a broader range of training than would normally be the case, as well as stronger camaraderie and some friendly banter.

Another P2000 straying from her typical waters was HMS Charger.

Normally based at HMS Eaglet on the Mersey, Charger serves students at university in Liverpool.

She left Brunswick Dock behind, however, to cross the Irish Sea bound for the County Antrim town of Portrush (a stone's throw from the Giant's Causeway) for Northern Ireland's International Air Show.

The aerial spectacular drew around 200,000 people (not all, of course, could squeeze aboard Charger when she opened her gangway to visitors).

The patrol boat was not the only RN participant in the waterfront show; the Fleet Air Arm's Black Cats helicopter display team could also be seen pirouetting across the sky in their Lynx.



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Pictures: LA(Phot) Brian Douglas

QUITE possibly no men or women in the Senior Service have been in a stickier situation this past month than the crew of HMS Monmouth.

The frigate has continued her global tour, leaving Australasia and sweeping around the Pacific Rim, first to the Philippines, then on to Japan and further to China.

Manila was the first port of call – in the heart of the rainy season.

And it was somewhat sticky in the Filipino capital: 35°C with 97 per cent humidity.

The Black Duke’s crew did all the usual things on an official visit: call in on dignitaries, host VIPs, appear on national TV and

newspapers... and some not so usual things.

Several members of the ship’s company donned eye patches, scarfs and oodles of make-up (*must be a run ashore – Ed*) for a piratical party.

Monmouth hosted 60 local youngsters for a swashbuckling-themed party, while 30 sailors headed ashore for a couple of days’ hard graft at schools and an orphanage in Manila.

Dealing with modern-day pirates was a more serious task. The Black Duke shared her expertise in counter-terror operations by working with the Philippine forces on board and search training.

That training was repaid for one sixth of the ship’s company with

an invite to an official reception from the Philippine Navy. (What the invite didn’t mention was the small point of Monmouth’s CO, Cdr Tim Peacock, having to attempt Filipino dancing...)

The ship’s stay in Manila ended with a send-off from the band of the Philippine Navy and an escort from the patrol ship Quezon, before the Black Duke picked her way through a flurry of fishing boats and headed for open waters.

Those open waters eventually took the Devonport warship to the Japanese island of Okinawa, home to a major US naval base.

It was, mercifully, rather less sticky in Okinawa than Manila.

And that meant sporting activity (of a sort) could resume: a beach barbecue was accompanied by a touch rugby contest (the chiefs’ mess proved the most agile and lifted the trophy).

Several crew toured the tunnels built by Japanese troops defending the island in 1945, while others preferred the rather more relaxing surroundings of the Churaumi aquarium (the world’s second largest), home to a dolphin with a prosthetic tail, three whale sharks and a manta ray born in captivity... until its father killed it.

Next on the agenda was the Chinese naval base Qingdao – better known to Britons in the Westernised form Tsingtao and home of the eponymous brewery.

Monmouth joined with the Chinese missile destroyer Qingdao to carry out a joint rescue exercise in the seas off the ship’s namesake city.

In the simulated rescue, the Royal Navy Merlin winched an injured sailor from a wrecked vessel to Monmouth, while the Chinese ship’s helicopter sent help to the stricken ship.

The three-hour exercise brought together 500 Chinese and Royal Naval sailors perfecting the deft drills of manoeuvre, rescue and communications.

Monmouth’s CO Cdr Peacock and visiting Flag Officer Rear Admiral Chris Parry were welcomed with official receptions at Qingdao in all its forms – the city, the naval base and the ship.

Good relationships between the British and the Chinese were further developed when the sailors from the Royal Navy headed off to visit the city’s Tsingtao Brewery, as well as a few other cultural highlights along the way.

The admiral was in the country to support the ongoing relationship between the UK and China; he also visited Beijing where he discussed issues such as peace support operations.

In Beijing Rear Admiral Parry paid a call on the Academy of Military Science, where he was presented with a bamboo scroll in fine Chinese calligraphy of *The Art of War* by China’s pre-eminent military strategist of the 6th Century BC Sun Tzu – an appropriate gift for the admiral who is the Director General, Developments, Concepts and Doctrine MOD.

● (right) Lt ‘Whiskey’ Walker is winched off the flightdeck of the Chinese landing ship LST(H) 912 during a search and rescue exercise

● (top) HMS Monmouth travels alongside the Chinese warship Qingdao after leaving the naval base at the ship’s namesake Qingdao



● The new 15m MOD Police launch

Picture: Paul Kemp, MDPGA

MDP surges forward

FOR THE first time, an innovative launch has been developed for the Ministry of Defence Police.

The striking new boat has been designed to meet the MDP’s tough standards as the police force patrols the waters around the Navy’s bases at Devonport, Portsmouth and Clyde.

Assistant Chief Constable John Bligh said: “The Force has taken possession of many new launches over the years; however, this is the first time that we have been involved in the design process from day one. We have listened close to the Naval Base authorities to ensure that the boat will enable us to provide the service they want.”

He added: “We are still conducting trials but every

indication so far is that this launch will be far and away the most capable and impressive vessel of its type in the UK, if not beyond.”

The 15m launch, built by Holyhead Marine Services Ltd, is the first of its type.

Officers describe it as quicker, more manoeuvrable, better protected and more comfortable.

It has a top speed of more than 30 knots, and uses water-jet technology for greater agility in driving and steering – the lack of propellers also make it safer for people in the water.

If the new launch continues to meet expectations, it is planned that a further 15 launches will be brought into service.



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Future, real... and imagined



THE firepower and mobility of the Navy's elite infantry will be bolstered with the arrival of new armoured vehicles in 2008.

The Royal Marines' fleet of Vikings will swell by 21, while beefed-up Land Rovers which the commandos use on patrols in Afghanistan will be replaced with faster, more mobile and better armoured Supacats – described as “like a Land Rover on steroids”.

Viking is one of the true success stories of the British Armed Forces this past decade, earning (and continuing to earn) its battle

spurs in the rugged terrain of Afghanistan.

The Royals originally ordered 108 Vikings (strictly speaking the BVS10 All-Terrain Vehicle (Protected)) which were delivered to the Corps in 2003 by Swedish firm Hagglunds.

Afghanistan is the first theatre of war the Vikings have seen (they were tested extensively in the UK and Norway before heading to Helmand).

There the vehicles have impressed friend and foe alike.

“We’ve listened in to what the Taliban have been saying about us,” said Maj Jez Hermer of the Royal Marines Armoured Support Company based at Bovington.

“They call Viking a ‘tank’.

We’ve been on manoeuvres with 13 Vikings and the Taliban have been talking about about ‘up to 70 “tanks”’, which shows the impression the vehicle can make.”

Viking is not a tank. It’s an armoured vehicle which offers its two-crew and passengers improved protection over the BVs the Corps have been using for years. It’s also even more agile than a BV... which is pretty manoeuvrable in itself.

“There is no vehicle in the world in my opinion which is more

mobile than this. It will go literally anywhere.”

Vikings deployed to Helmand 12 months ago – and remained in the province when the bulk of 3 Commando Brigade returned to Blighty at the end of their deployment in the spring.

“Since the beginning of the Afghan conflict, everyone has woken up to the success of Viking – it’s now very important to Operation Herrick,” Maj Hermer.

● **Royal Marines patrol Helmand province in Afghanistan... on foot, in WMIKs and in Vikings**

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RN Photographer of the Year

“I see it remaining in Afghanistan and I don’t see it coming back until the end of the commitment.”

Maj Hermer says some of his comrades were sceptical about the vehicle – armour was for the Army.

“It was a bit of a leap of faith, but now the guys who operate it could not go on operations without it,” he added.

“It’s opened up Helmand province and proved indispensable.”

Whitehall is looking for another 21 Vikings to join the existing force in the second half of 2008.

Another regular sight through the swirling dust of

Afghanistan has been the WMIK Land Rover – basically a stripped-down jeep with a bloody big gun.

The WMIK (Weapon Mounted Installation Kit) has performed well in Helmand... but senior commanders are keen to bolster the troops’ mobility and firepower – and protection.

The result is the MWMIK (the extra ‘m’ stands for ‘mobility’) and 130 have been ordered for Britain’s armed forces in a £30m deal signed between the MOD and Plymouth-based DML.

The new vehicles, based on a design by Supacat Ltd, can carry three troops and race around at speeds of up to 80mph. Firepower comes in the shape of a .50 calibre machine-gun or grenade launcher and GPMG.

Troops who have tested the prototype versions have described the MWMIK as “like a Land Rover on steroids”, while some in the media have dubbed the vehicle the ‘Mad Max 4x4’.

“These vehicles are well armed, swift, and agile. They will boost our capability with some serious firepower. MOD and the Treasury have worked hard to get these powerful vehicles to our troops in quick time, and they will start going out to theatre early next year,” said Lord Drayson, Minister for Defence Equipment and Support.

The vehicles will be assembled at DML’s workshops in Devonport naval base. Universal Engineering Ltd will manufacture the chassis, Cummings the engine, and Allison the transmission.

The MWMIKs will be delivered to front-line troops next year.

● **Troops demonstrate the agility of a prototype MWMIK**

Picture: LA(Phot) Emily Chambers, FRPU West



THIS is the warship Portsmouth shipbuilder VT hopes will become the backbone of the Fleet into the middle of the 21st Century.

The firm used the DSEi defence exhibition in London to unveil its design for the next generation of medium-sized warships.

Whitehall will be looking to begin replacing its frigate and minewarfare fleet in the coming decade with a vessel known as the ‘Future Surface Combatant’.

VT has put forward a fleet of eight ‘super patrol vessel’ to carry out general purpose duties, including patrols, minehunting and survey work.

The FSC proposed by VT (pictured right) would displace around 3,000 tons, carry a helicopter up to Merlin size and be armed with a 76mm or 30mm main gun, with the possibility of also carrying surface-to-air missiles. VT says the ship would require a crew of just 76 – less than half that required by a Type 23 frigate.

As it has done with the current River-class fleet of patrol ships, VT is offering to lease these proposed new vessels to the Navy.

If the MOD likes the concept, VT says the first FSC could be in service as early as 2012.



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From rasher with love

ASSAULT ship HMS Albion paid her second visit of the year to the Baltic to clear up Nature's wrath.

The Devonport-based warship – here accompanied by HDMS Thetis, pictured by LA(Phot) Dan Hooper – and her two Lynx helicopters of 815 NAS joined some 20 vessels and military units from five nations (Britain, Denmark, Poland, Germany and Norway) for Danex07, spread across the Kattegat and Skagerrak.

Danex (DANish EXercise) is, not surprisingly, a major war game organised by the land of bacon, pastries and Carlsberg.

The emphasis on this year's war game was very much saving lives rather than waging war and the organisers set up a frighteningly realistic scenario for the international force to contend with.

The aim was to clear up in the aftermath of a natural disaster – in this case an earthquake – and evacuate the terrified population.

Albion's permanent Royal Marine force, 6 Assault Squadron, were called upon to maintain law and order, while their landing craft ferried ashore hot food, rescue teams, pumps, fire-fighting kit and tents for the earthquake victims.

And if the teams from FOST try to make the experience of disaster relief at Bull Point in Plymouth pretty realistic, well their Danish counterparts take it a stage further.

The Danes buried vehicles beneath a landslide... with people, not dummies, in the trapped cars. To add to the 'fun' Albion's fire-fighters had to tackle blazes where the flames raised temperatures to 400°C.

It's just four months since Albion was last in Danish waters for a huge NATO exercise and a return to the country, including ceremonial duties in Copenhagen (see page 32), proved pretty popular.

"Danex has been an interesting challenge for the ship's team," said CO Capt Tim Lowe.

"We've greatly enjoyed being back in the Baltic working with our international colleagues. All in all, it's been a very successful start to our autumn programme."

Albion paid a brief visit to Portsmouth on her way home before returning to her native Devonport.



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Somer-set for success

WHEN the men and women of HMS Somerset formed up on the jetty in their native Devonport last month it marked the end of one chapter in the frigate's proud history... and the beginning of a fresh one.

Somerset was re-dedicated in her home port last month, watched by the woman who launched her, Lady Elspeth Layard, friends and families.

The ceremony brought the curtain down on more than a year and a half of work on the frigate – firstly a major refit at Rosyth, then, after leaving Scotland in April, months of work-up before finally being officially welcomed back into the arms of the Fleet.

'New' Somerset is considerably more potent than 'old' Somerset: the team at Rosyth put in new sonar kit, new anti-torpedo kit, a new main gun, a new remote-control 30mm chain gun – Bushmaster, the first to be fitted in the RN – and revamped her flight deck to carry a Merlin helicopter.

Emerging from refit with all this 'Gucci' equipment, plus a new ship's company, has meant a pretty ferocious work-up programme around the British Isles.

And every stage of said programme has been charted (complete with downs, as well as ups) by Somerset's present CO, Cdr Rob Wilson.

He's compiled a captain's blog – basically a diary on the internet – which, to date, has been read by more than 11,000 people.

And while work-up is jolly hard graft, there are breaks for jolly good fun.



● HMS Somerset sails up the Dart on a glorious summer's morning at the beginning of Dartmouth Royal Regatta

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt, FRPU West

Somerset took her friends and family to sea for a day of fun shortly before her re-dedication ceremony.

She also stood guard in the middle of the River Dart as the RN's official representative at the Dartmouth Royal Regatta (*see page 19*), an event which traces its proud history back to the mid-19th Century.

Somerset herself can trace her history back rather further: the name has been borne, on and off, by the Royal Navy since 1698.

Indeed strangely, given the historic county she represents,

the name Somerset has been 'off' more than it's been 'on'; it was not carried by one of His or Her Majesty's Ships for more than two centuries.

Of the four HMS Somersets, three served in the 18th Century.

The first was an 80-gun ship of the line, flagship of Sir George Rooke at Vigo Bay in 1702 when he annihilated a Franco-Spanish force.

Her fighting days ended in 1715 and she was finally broken up in 1740.

By then, the second HMS Somerset had already been in

service for nine years, although she only saw a single day of battle: February 11, 1744, as part of the British fleet at the Battle of Toulon. She returned to Chatham to be broken up 1746 – and was going to be pieced back together until the Admiralty cancelled the order.

The third bearer of the name is perhaps the most famous.

Launched in Chatham in 1748, she saw action a decade later in the capture of Louisbourg and Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, then put Wolfe's army ashore the following year below the Heights

of Abraham in Quebec.

Her career ended in 1778 when she ran aground and was wrecked chasing a French blockade runner off Cape Cod during the American War of Independence.

Two centuries later and her name is kept alive... by our one-time foe; American re-enactors who dress up as the ship's company of the age (they've not yet managed to recreate the ship herself, however).

You can follow the ship's continuing exploits courtesy of Cdr Wilson's blog at hms-somerset-co.blogspot.com



Vigo 1702
Velez Malaga..... 1704
Louisburg..... 1758
Quebec..... 1759

Class: Type 23 frigate
Pennant number: F82
Builder: Yarrow Shipbuilders, Clyde
Laid down: October 12 1992
Launched: June 24 1994
Commissioned: September 20 1996
Displacement: 3,500 tonnes
Length: 133 metres
Beam: 16 metres
Draught: 7 metres
Speed: 28kts
Complement: 185 men and women
Propulsion: CODLAG; two Rolls-Royce Spey SM1C gas turbines, four Paxman diesels
Sensors: Radar 996 – long-range 3D surveillance; radar 1007 – high-definition navigation radar; radar 1008 – ship safety; sonar 2050 – omnidirectional, hull-mounted active sonar; sonar 2087 – variable depth sonar; sonar 2170 – surface ship torpedo defence; UAT – passive surveillance; GPEOD – general purpose electro-optical director used for the 4.5in gun; AIS – automatic identification system
Armament: Seawolf; Harpoon; 4.5in gun; Bushmaster 30mm cannon; minigun; general purpose machine gun; magazine torpedo launch system
Helicopter: Merlin HM1

Facts and figures



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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.42

S/Lt Jack Easton RNVR and OS Bennett Southwell – GC

NESTLING in London's East End, the houses of Clifton Street in Shoreditch bore the blank-eyed, harrowed look that typified the Blitz-era London while their inhabitants hid within the city's air-raid shelters.

On October 17, 1941, S/Lt Jack Maynard Cholmondeley Easton and OS Bennett Southwell walked down the deserted street to the house with the smashed roof partially obscured by the silken parachute canopy.

The parachute mine, holding 1,500lb of undetonated explosive, hung in the tenuous grip of a tattered chimney pot and an old wrought-iron bedstead.

The front door could not be opened wider than a few inches and the officer could not squeeze in to deal with the German bomb.

So in pragmatic mine-disposal fashion, he climbed over walls and through windows to get to the mine through the house's back window.

Once inside, Easton set to work with Southwell passing to him his tools through the doorway.

The magnetic mine, almost 9ft in length, was held in the cat's cradle of its own parachute's lines as the officer began the delicate work of dismantling the fuse...

... until the trickle of dust overhead turned to a roar as the chimney collapsed, dropping its deadly burden in one jolt.

As the brickdust billowed, Easton's senses were alive to only one thing – the sound of the mine mechanism whirring into life.

He bellowed a warning to Southwell and forced his way out of the nearest doorway, running at full pelt to the only cover within range as the scant seconds on the timer ticked away to oblivion.

Hurling himself at the air-raid shelter on the roadside, the flare of the explosion blinded Easton then the roar deafened him before he lost all senses to unconsciousness.

As sight, sound and sense slowly drifted back to Easton, he found himself shrouded in bricks and rubble, his head pressed tortuously into his legs, his body racked in pain.

Later he said: "To this day I do not know how long I spent in my grave. Most of that time I was unconscious."

"The conscious moments were of horror and utter helplessness."

The massive mine destroyed six London streets in its shattering explosion.

Rescuers eventually dug Easton out of his rubble-strewn tomb; Southwell was not so lucky

– he had been decapitated. And his body was not found until six weeks later.

Easton spent the next twelve months swathed in plaster while his body slowly repaired the two broken legs, the fractured pelvis and skull.

As he lay in his hospital bed in January 1941, Easton was surprised to receive three cases of champagne sent by the Admiralty with the instruction to listen to the radio at nine o'clock.

The news crackled over the airwaves, announcing that he was to receive the George Cross.

Southwell too was awarded the George Cross posthumously.

Easton, who had volunteered for the ordnance disposal path to escape the tedium of training at HMS King Alfred, stayed in the Royal Navy and stayed in the mine-disposal line.

He was appointed to the trawler base at Dartmouth, where he took command of motor minesweepers no.6 and no.22.

The GC winner led a mine-sweeping flotilla amid the traumas of D-Day – when he was injured again by a German oyster mine exploding under his ship.

After the war, Easton returned to his life as a solicitor with the family firm William Easton's in London.



Slime and punishment

WHAT a fine summer it has been.

No, not the weather. That was rotten.

No we're talking penalties. Punishments. Fines. More than £100,000 worth to be precise – all imposed on errant fishermen.

Indeed, all imposed on errant fishermen thanks to the efforts of the Fishery Protection Squadron.

Since the start of April this year, the five ships have notched up 570 inspections, the detection of 80 offences and the detention of ten fishing vessels – prompting those trips to court.

The Marine Fisheries Agency is rightly chuffed with the squadron's fishbusting (*Is that a word? – Ed*) efforts, signing an agreement with the RN to continue its fishery protection patrols until 2011.

"The work is not particularly glamorous, with some inspections taking in excess of ten hours, in cramped fishing vessels and high seas – but the results speak

for themselves," said Lt Andrew Ainsley, Executive Officer of HMS Severn.

A routine patrol by his ship back in May netted a detention that resulted in fines of almost £21,000 after a Severn boarding team arrived under cover of darkness alongside a Belgian beam trawler.

In the ensuing inspection the fishing nets were found lined with 'blindings' – these reduce the size of the mesh in the net, catching juvenile and undersized fish.

In the bowels of the trawler was found a freezer packed with 4,000 sole, all beneath the legal fishing size, and the logbook failed to record fully the numbers of skates, rays and plaice held within the hull.

Sister ship HMS Mersey has been proving the joint nature of modern fishery protection, working with the Netherlands' Coastguard Vessel Barend Beisheuvel, and checking out British fishing boats

within Spanish fishing limits and Dutch waters.

Of course it's not just fish that keep these patrol ships busy around British waters – even those territorial ones around the far distant Falkland Islands.

Winding up her Falkland Islands patrol duties, HMS Dumbarton Castle – now preparing for her long journey back to Blighty – fittingly took part in the islands' 25th anniversary commemoration events.

"She has also been able to visit many of the outlying islands that were fought over in the 1982 war," said Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Ian Lynn, "many of which have memorials, cairns or crosses to the men that died there."

"It is to these that the ship's company will often go ashore and maintain, always aided by the prospect of 'tea and stickies' from the islanders."

Many of the sailors from the 'Last Castle' have chosen to extend their time on board for an extra six months to take part in the final chapter of her worthy career and see her through her decommissioning.

From the oldest to the youngest... HMS Clyde – the Navy's newest commissioned warship – is ready to take up Dumbarton Castle's duty patrolling the waters around the Falklands.

In a few short months Clyde has been accepted for service in the Fleet, taken on intensive sea training in Scotland, visited her affiliated port of Inverclyde and run through a month of tough aviation training – she is the only River-class to have a flight deck and can operate anything up to a Merlin helicopter.

"The ship's company are looking forward to her Falklands' arrival, as most have been on board since she was bare metal and are extremely proud of the progress she has made," her Operations Officer Lt Gavin Lowe said.

Closer to home HMS Mersey ventured into some unusual territorial waters – Scotland...

"Visits north of the border

are few and far between," said Lt Cdr Jonathan Lett, Mersey's Commanding Officer, "as the Scottish Fishery Protection Agency conducts fishery patrols of Scottish waters."

"But this was no holiday for Mersey – on arrival in Faslane she was under the watchful eyes of the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training who put the crew through a rigorous package of training, including everything from fires, floods and collisions, to attacks, riots, armed boardings and salvage."

A visit to Glasgow, berthed near the Glasgow Science Centre, proved a big draw, but the highlight for her year was a visit to Liverpool and her affiliated borough of Sefton.

Sailors from the patrol ship headed into the city's Waterloo district to spruce up a local park, clearing out a neglected waterfall, stream and pond.

HMS Tyne too made a journey up her namesake river in July, berthing in Newcastle for the Mouth of the River festival.

Ten members of the ship's company paraded through the streets in the Tynemouth Gala Procession.

This followed on from the ship's enjoyable visit to Jersey earlier this year to mark the anniversary of the island's liberation from German occupation in World War 2 – particularly successful as the ship's then CO (he's now taken charge of HMS Clyde) Lt Cdr Paul Pitcher is a Jerseyman himself.

"The Fishery Protection Squadron continues to go from strength to strength, and as the Navy's oldest squadron continues to provide internationally renowned and respected fisheries enforcement," said Cdr Darren Cartwright, Squadron Commander.

"From Nelson to the present day and beyond, the ships of the Fishery Protection Squadron have been to the fore, not only protecting our todays, but more importantly, our children's tomorrows."

● **HMS Clyde** – with her extended flightdeck – and Severn meet in the south coast exercise areas



● **Dynamic duo...** HM Ships Severn and Tyne patrol as a pair



● **Severn fingers...** Sea fisheries officers from HMS Severn discover an illegal net; reducing the size of the mesh in the net prevents juvenile and undersized fish escaping



● **The Last Castle** – HMS Dumbarton Castle basks in the sunset in San Carlos Water

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Ships of the

“YOU lead from the front.”

Thus spoke Audie Murphy, the most decorated American soldier of World War 2.

Wise words.

You do indeed lead from the front on the battlefield.

But sometimes, just sometimes, you can impart more knowledge and achieve greater results by doing the opposite... leading from behind.

It is, says Capt Tim Stockings, Commanding Officer of the Naval Transition Team (NaTT), how the finest traditions and skills of the Royal and US Navies and US Coast Guard are passed on to the fledgling Iraqi Navy and Marines.

The transition team is the smallest of the training and mentoring organisations provided by the Allied powers to nurture the Iraqi military.

The aim of Army and Navy mentors alike is to ensure that when the Allies withdraw their forces from Iraq, the country's sailors and soldiers can take charge of their own borders and territorial waters.

The Iraqi Navy comprises less than one per cent of its country's total Armed Forces strength.

The backbone of the 'fleet' are five inshore patrol craft – capable of speeds in excess of 30kts – supported by smaller Fast Aluminium Boats, or FABs, (think RIBs or Rigid Raiders with roofs).

In the coming months the force will mushroom, as 21 new vessels are brought into service – again under the tutelage of the NaTT.

Like the Navy it is raising, the NaTT is based at Umm Qasr, Iraq's principal deep-water port just across the border from Kuwait.

The team is surprisingly small – it consists of just 60 British sailors, soldiers, Royal Marines, US Navy, US Marines and US Coast Guard personnel.

The work is divided pretty much as you would expect: the sailors focus on ship-handling and seafaring, the marines and coast guards oversee board and search missions and the defence of the two oil platforms in the northern Gulf which account for 90 per cent of Iraq's wealth.

Meanwhile, back in Umm Qasr, engineers help out in the workshops, logisticians advise in the warehouse and the operations team assist in the command HQ.

These pages have covered the efforts of the transition team over the past four years.

And transition is perhaps a word which best describes the team itself over that period.

For whereas once it instructed, now it sits back, observes, advises, comments.

“Mentoring is more than just training – it means letting the Iraqis do things for themselves, making their own mistakes and hopefully learning from them,” explains Lt Cdr Rob Beadnell, the training officer.

And that means stepping *back* at times when something goes wrong, rather than stepping *in* – to see how the rookie sailors react, to see whether they can solve the problem without external input.

“It can occasionally be frustrating, sometimes time consuming,” Lt Cdr Beadnell adds, “but pretty enjoyable when the Iraqis get it right.”

● An Iraqi patrol boat races through the Gulf



● FAB times... An Iraqi Fast Aluminium Boat is escorted out of Umm Qasr by two RIBs and (above) on patrol in the Khawr Abd Allah



Back to School

THERE'S a real buzz in the Training School as another platoon of marines turns up for classes.

A brief period of chaos follows as they all try to check the board at the same time to see which classrooms they're supposed to be in.

The general noise level rises as dits and jokes echo down the corridor then suddenly, as quickly as they appear, they're gone – off into class – and normality returns to the shiny tiled hallway.

“It's like this most mornings” says Lt Cdr Beadnell.

“The sailors and marines are just as enthusiastic as our recruits, so the school can get pretty lively.”

A wide variety of courses are run at the naval base: induction classes for officers and ratings, specialist training in engineering and seamanship, as well as language lessons.

Over the past few months, the emphasis has been very much on ‘top-up’ training (officially it's called ‘continuation training’).

Each week a different ship's crew and marine platoon go back to school to refresh their skills to ensure they haven't forgotten what they were taught.

It's all good fun but very serious as the sailors and marines have to pass if they are to earn the crucial tag ‘fully mission capable’.

“We're involved in every stage of the training,” Lt Cdr Beadnell adds.

“We've worked hard to get the right people as

teachers. It's important that the marines and sailors are taught by people who know what they're doing and are respected.”

One significant step forward recently has been ensuring the Iraqi sailors and marines shoot the AK47 on the range and at sea on a regular basis, supervised by senior marine NCOs.

“This led to a big increase in standards – as well as a much safer base,” Lt Cdr Beadnell adds with a smile.

Another major bonus has been provided by the arrival of two interpreters – Lt Athos Ritsperis and LS Rupert Young – to teach the Iraqi sailors English.

That's not so that they can understand their mentors.

It's so they can conduct boarding operations. As in the air, so in the sea, English is the language of transportation.

It's not just trainee ratings who pass through the NaTT at Umm Qasr.

As of the end of August, 46 officers had arrived at the base, having already undergone basic military training at Iraq's academy in Nasariyah.

What happens next very much mirrors the education of the RN's officers; the Iraqis go to sea for a week to give them experience of life aboard a working warship in the shape of RFA Sir Bedivere.

The next step of broadening their knowledge is to undertake bridge and engineering watchkeeping in September and plans are in hand to educate at least three Iraqi Navy officers at Dartmouth later this year.

AW is fit

desert

WITH all the media hoo-ha surrounding British operations in Basra, it's easy to forget that just a couple of hours' drive away a small Royal Navy-led team is behind one of the success stories of post-war Iraq. Here, the sailors and Royal Marines of the **Naval Transition Team** provide an insight into their vital mission.

Platform booties

LIKE their British and American counterparts, Iraq's marines split their time between sea and shore.

Unlike their British counterparts, Iraqi marines are not commandos; they are naval infantry.

But their duties mirror many of those performed by the Royals: point defence (of the oil platforms), base security (of the er, base) and board, search and seize operations (of vessels using territorial waters).

We'll begin on the oil platforms.

It's 50°C and the sun is beating down on the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT).

Capt Ed 'Sprog' Argles RM, the NaTT military training officer and WO1 'Fruity' Paskins (Paskins sounds like 'pastille', apparently, hence the nickname) from the staff of the coalition task force in the northern Gulf, make their way from barge Ocean Six to the Iraqi Tactical Operations Centre for another 'smoking barrel' exercise.

Will the Iraqi Marines pull it out of the bag today? Will they pass and be able to move on to the next challenge the coalition has lined up for them, the 'beast' that is Exercise Total Guardian – a 24-hour test of procedures and their consistency.

Total Guardian begins with the two Brits greeting the Iraqis with the usual shaking of hands and cries of enthusiasm.

The instant Arabic chatter on the net puts a smile on their faces as it signifies that the Iraqis, like any good sailors or marines around the world, have already informed their commander what is happening – the two Britons are making their way over to train and test them. They know what's coming and they know what they have to do.

As the first contact is sighted on the radar by the Iraqi platoon commander, he immediately informs his men (drenched thanks to the humidity) who are in position, tracking the target.

At the appropriate time, the platoon runner picks up the air horn and – with a cheeky smile, as he knows they are not expecting it – runs out in front of Ed and 'Fruity' and gives it three good blasts to wake up his fellow comrades who have to make their way to their positions on the oil platform.

The Iraqis in body armour and helmets start

their run against the clock – four minutes is all they have to get into their positions and be ready to repel the inbound contact.

They manage it and show a sound understanding of their procedures.

Three runs later and it's all over, each target has been destroyed successfully and the oil platform defended. The debrief takes place and all concerned are pleased by the performance.

As they go for tea with the Iraqi Platoon Commander to discuss the exercise, Ed and 'Fruity' give a sigh of relief; all the training that has taken place is paying off and it's a very satisfying feeling.

"Working with the Iraqis has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience," says Capt Argles.

"Since arriving in March I have found them to be keen, willing to learn and full of enthusiasm. They take great pride in the fact that they are being trained by organisations that have a world-wide reputation for being the best. I'm enjoying it."

Back in Umm Qasr, a typical working day in the life of a marine in the Royal Marines Force Protection Troop runs as follows:

A few hours are spent on duty in the operations room; there will be some time in overseeing a civilian contractor working within the NaTT compound; then there's a trip to the main gate of the Iraqi Naval Base to verify the Iraqi marines are in proper kit and conducting sound procedures; a stint at the landing site providing security for helicopter movement ensues; and there might be a trip off base to meet a re-supply convoy or out on the water providing protection for the Navy personnel in their training duties and, if time allows, a portion of the day dedicated to training.

Duty on the main gate is an important part of the Royals' work and provides opportunity for mentoring the Iraqi Marines in their security duties.



Several platoons of Iraqi Marines are charged with security of the base; they man the main gate and search every vehicle and person entering the base.

They also man the Sanger bunkers around the base, protecting the entire perimeter, and provide a rapid response force to deal with any potential incidents.

"The Iraqi marines provide the first line of protection against the militias and insurgents so mentoring them and monitoring the standard of their performance not only gives us a training role, but also helps protect the NaTT," explains Capt Jon Schleyer RM, Officer Commanding the Force Protection Troop.

Good-natured banter is commonplace as marines humour reaches across the cultural and language divide.

"A tour down here gives the RMs the opportunity to conduct operations alongside other Services from the USA and UK as well as train the Iraqis," Capt Schleyer adds.

"There's plenty of physical activity as well...we organize a lot of sport activities and have a well equipped gym. Life is good."

'One heck of a job'

WE SHOULD not, of course, forget the American contribution to the training of the Iraqis.

Among the key tasks for our American cousins is the expansion of the Iraqi Navy to almost double its current size, ensuring that the correct people are recruited at the right time and put through proper training.

None of these changes can happen if the barracks, offices, stores and workshops are not ready on time, so Capt Tim Zakriski USN, a Seabee (engineer), has his hands full making sure that the buildings are going up quickly enough.

"It's one heck of a job but we're getting there," he says as he surveys the building site. "One day all this is going to be a new naval base that the Iraqis can be proud of."

More Americans are attached to the Iraqi Marine board, search and seize platoons, in the shape of the US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) who are embedded within the platoons during both training and operational boardings in territorial waters.

Whilst these waters are relatively small, they are strategically important: the vast majority of Iraq's revenue flows through the two oil terminals and the port of Umm Qasr is

commercially important – and piracy does occur.

The board and search team complete their training ashore before moving to Sir Bedivere for more practical instruction: hand-cuffing, close quarters combat, defensive techniques and tactics.

"The work is not easy given the language barrier and the hot, demanding working environment," said Lt Jamin Stortz USCG, Officer in Charge of the law enforcement detachment.

"Boarding operations in Iraqi territorial waters are a shining example of success where Iraqi and coalition forces work side-by-side to achieve a common mission.

"Now the Iraqi marines are beginning to board tankers bound for the oil terminals independent of coalition teams with just a couple LEDET members on hand to mentor the platoon through the boarding."



● NaTT Marine Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Graham West and an Iraqi officer inspect work done to patrol boat 103 and (above) Iraqi marines take aim on the range

Pictures: LA(Phot) Jannine Hartmann, FRPU Whale Island

Historic air station under threat

ONE of the birthplaces of naval aviation could vanish beneath a wind farm if planners give the scheme the go-ahead.

The former airfield at Pulham, near Diss in Norfolk, was at the heart of Britain's experiment with airships between the Great War and the early 1930s.

Energy firm SLP is considering erecting seven 400ft wind turbines on the East Anglian site, a move which has prompted vehement local opposition from villagers, who complain that the wind farm would be unsightly – and from historians who fear the development would eradicate what is left of the airfield.

The Admiralty snapped up land at Pulham in 1912 – it's actually several miles inland, beyond the range of the guns of Germany's High Seas Fleet.

By 1916 the Navy had established a substantial air station on the former farmland.

Blimps and airships based at Pulham carried out vital scouting missions over the North Sea and the 'Pulham Pigs', as they became known, also led the fight against the U-boat.

When the German submarine fleet surrendered in November 1918, it was a Pulham-based airship dispatched to escort them.

And it was to Pulham that the airship R34 returned from the first transatlantic round-trip.

By the war's end, 3,000 servicemen were based at Pulham and two huge airship sheds dominated the skyline.

Both are now gone (one was dismantled and put up again at Cardington, home of the ill-fated R101) and much of the air station has returned to its original farming use.

But local historian Hadrian Jeffs says that scratch beneath the surface and much of Pulham's aviation heritage remains: the foundations of the sheds, the silicol generator plant which produced the hydrogen to fill the airships, and the 90ft mooring mast – the world's first such mast, and perhaps Britain's principal contribution to airship development.

"Pulham is a site of not only local, but national, even global importance and it should not be obliterated," said Mr Jeffs.

"Much, if not all, would be irreparably damaged, if not destroyed outright by the proposed development – representing an irreplaceable loss to British aviation heritage."

SLP, based in Lowestoft, has asked for permission initially from South Norfolk Council to erect a wind measuring mast to see whether the site would be suitable for a larger wind turbine farm.

● All smiles from some of the female contingent aboard HMS Invincible during the carrier's visit to Barcelona in 2004

Picture: LA(Phot) Matt Ellison



'As long as you can do the job, that's what matters'

IN THE messdeck of HMS Marlborough, opinions were readily expressed – and rarely did they agree.

But there was one thing Kevin 'Snowy' Winter and his shipmates were convinced of – to a man. "Women at sea?" they mused. "Nah, never work."

The mess deck views of 'Snowy' Winter and his shipmates were prevalent in the late 80s and early 90s. Visiting warships, Armed Forces Minister Archie Hamilton – today Lord Hamilton – found officers fairly receptive to the idea of women going to sea.

"As you moved down the ranks, they got more and more reactionary," he remembers. "When you got to the junior ranks" mess they thought the whole thing was an absolutely outrageous idea."

Equality laws and growing political correctness might have

WHEN Archie Hamilton stood up in the House of Commons on Monday February 5 1990, he announced the greatest sea change in the Royal Navy's history: women would go to sea. Seventeen years after that momentous decision, historians from the Royal Naval Museum have interviewed sailors to see what the fairer sex have brought to the Senior Service – and whether attitudes have changed.

tackled such trenchant opinions, but the driving force behind the MP's decision in February 1990 was a lack of good men.

"We just didn't have the right calibre of men coming forward – and we had very good women we were turning away. This always struck me as lunacy."

His announcement provoked a bulging postbag at *Navy News*. "At long last," declared one retired wren. A WW2 veteran shook his head: "Consider the harsh, brutal realities of war at sea." And in Hong Kong a wag put pen to paper: "We

feel the size of existing hatches is not sufficient to accommodate the average wren."

Naval wives were among the strongest opponents of women going to sea. They protested on the streets of Portsmouth and Plymouth, carrying banners warning of higher divorce rates and broken marriages.

"Putting wrens on board is like putting a match to a gasoline station," claimed one Gosport naval wife. "I think it will wreck more marriages and relationships," warned another from Dartmouth.

A decade and a half later Sophie Shaughnessy frets when her husband Lt Cdr Toby Shaughnessy puts to sea in a mixed ship. "I know it's stupid because we trust each other completely," she says. "I always prefer it when he's on an all-male ship."

And Toby Shaughnessy in turn probably has mixed feelings too. For Sophie Shaughnessy is a lieutenant commander (most recently she served in HMS Grafton) – and, as she readily admits, "I'm normally on a ship with far more men than he is women."

That is not to say that mixing men and women in the confines of a warship does not lead to relationships.

"They're fairly common – and not normally frowned upon too much unless, say, one of them is a boss of the other," says LMEM Mark Lock, who went out with a shipmate – from a different section; he also abided by the 'no touching' rule.

"I didn't see there was a problem with it – and no-one else had a problem with me."

The leading hand did notice some behavioural changes among some of his male shipmates.

"If people were on watch with a female and it was midnight, they would still turn up with their hair gelled and aftershave on – obviously it wouldn't happen on an all-male ship," he says.

Such preening isn't uncommon. "One of the chiefs told me that he'd never washed as much when he was at sea because he didn't want to go around stinking of grease all day in front of a lady," recalls LWtr Sarah Jackson of life aboard HMS Illustrious.

There have been other 'civilising effects', as 'Snowy' Winter calls them.

"I think it does have the effect of dampening down the language – the sexualised banter that goes around," he adds. "If you were all blokes together, I don't think anybody worried about that."

It also means that sod's operas – or rather ship's revues as they now are – are "a lot tamer" than they used to be.

And for those dyed-in-the-wool matelots who just could not accept women at sea, LWtr Jackson had the answer.

"There were some quite sexist jokes said in front of me – to see if I'd react," she says. "In the end I'd just tell him a dirtier joke than he'd told and completely show him up. I just had to fight fire with fire. In the end I won."

For then Lt Shaughnessy joining her first ship a decade ago, the important thing was to lay down her authority to some of the hoary stokers.

"I would have to really steel myself and say: 'Right, I'm going to go down and I'm going to talk to this particularly grumpy chief and I'm going to tell him that I found this was incorrect or wrong or needs tidying up,' because I knew the way he would just look at me in that sort of contemptuous type – Oh God, what do you know?"

After a decade of women going to sea, such attitudes are disappearing fast, or have vanished entirely – from the RN, at any rate,

but not from society.

"Even now at any cocktail party or social event, the first question you're asked is: 'Oh what's it like to be a woman at sea?'" says Lt Cdr Shaughnessy. "It's still seen as a novelty by some people who aren't in the services."

And it's still seen as a novelty by Fleet Street. Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson was the first female CO of a minehunter. "Within the Navy it wasn't a big issue – it was only a matter of time before a woman was selected to command a ship," she says. "It caused a little bit of a media flurry."

Lt Cdr Atkinson is no doubt she was "the first of many", and former Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Peter Abbott would certainly like to see more women follow in her footsteps – and beyond.

"There aren't enough senior officers yet who are female – you can count them on the fingers of one hand," he says. "They haven't got to admiral yet, but that's a question of time."

Seventeen years on from his momentous decision, Lord Hamilton is convinced he made the correct call.

"It must be right on equality grounds to give women the opportunity to serve in any walk of life that they want to where they can make a decent job of it," he says.

"I'm sure that we have strengthened the Navy as a result too, because I think it has raised the quality of people who now serve in the Navy whether they're male or female."

And 'Snowy' Winter? Have his opinions changed in 17 years?

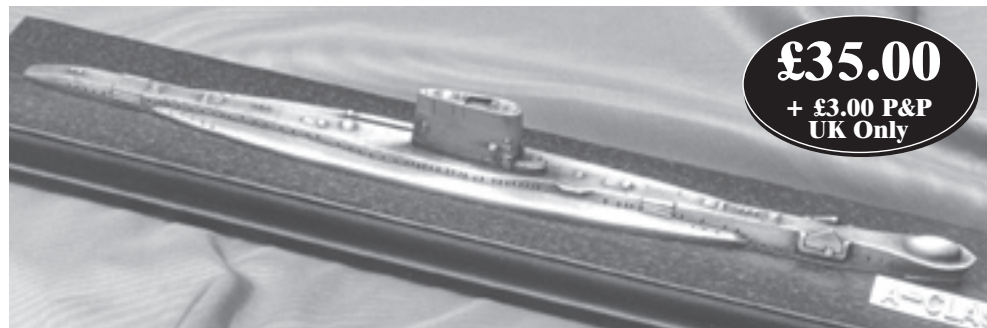
"I don't think anyone bats an eyelid any more," the warrant officer says. "It doesn't matter what sex you are, it doesn't matter what your sexual orientation is, you've got a job to do in the Navy. As long as you can do the job, that's what matters."

You can listen to the interviews and read transcripts at www.seayourhistory.org.uk in the 'oral gallery'.

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As preserved at Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport.

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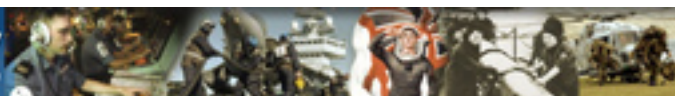
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Monkeys peak for Seafarers

THE NAVY took to the hills for the Lloyds Register 24-Peaks Challenge, scaling 24 different peaks, all over 2,400ft in just 24 hours to raise money for charity Seafarers UK.

Led by Lt Alan Ainsworth of DE&S, the team – oddly entitled Naughty Monkey – began their marathon in Keswick at 6.10 in the morning as they started up their first peak Red Pike – with only another nine scheduled to follow...

Alan and his team mates, POWEA Fiona Millington of HMS Chatham, LMEM Will Atkinson of 539 ASRM, and Lt Jack Frost of MWS, survived a truly glorious onslaught of July weather.

"As well as the mountainous terrain," said Alan, "the team battled prolonged downpours of heavy rain, quagmire underfoot, fresh winds and long periods of very low visibility that threatened to thwart our navigation."

"Several bouts of horizontally-driven hail really stung – but at least it kept us awake."

Ten peaks down in 13 hours the team retired to collapse in their bunks before starting again at 4.55 the next morning, where they set out to conquer the remaining 14 peaks.

Job done the Naval team romped home in an official time of 22 hours 28 minutes, spurred on by the thought of its sponsors from across the Naval service.

But Alan is already throwing down the gauntlet – "I dare say there are plenty of you out there sat in your comfort zones."

"Look around you now – do

Craig sets off to the Pole

FORMER Royal Marine Reservist Craig Colclough is determined to spend Christmas amid the ice and snow of the North Pole, all for the Royal British Legion and SSAFA.

Craig, now a Territorial Army medic, is hoping to raise £50,000 through the Chasing the Aurora expedition.

He will also be undertaking medical research during his 700-mile round trip to the Magnetic North Pole and back, collecting samples of his own blood every six hours for analysis of hormonal activity.

In the murk of the polar 24-hour night, Craig will be undertaking the challenge with head-torch and night-vision goggles.

Craig said: "I am fitter now than I have ever been and at 37 this is perhaps my last chance to do something special while helping two charities I care passionately about."

"My wife is convinced that this is an elaborate way to commit suicide."

Support Craig at www.justgiving.com/chasingtheaurorapartone



● Riptide, featuring POAEM Chubbs Chamberlain as lead singer, POAEM Phil Roche (guitar), LAEM Woody Woodhouse (drums), POAEM Willie Baird (bass guitar) and SAC Andy Gloyne (guitar), perform at Helstonbury

Picture: PO Bob Sharples

The other rock festival

ROCK bands and artists flocked to enjoy this year's Helstonbury – yes, that's right – Helstonbury.

Organised year in year out by PO Paul Turton of 814 NAS, the event draws the cream of the cream of the Navy's musical talent in bands like Bobby's Helmet, Riptide and Blue on Black, all in aid of children's charities in the Helston area near RNAS Culdrose.

This year's event, bolstered by a massive turnout of people from the base and local community, raised some £4,000 – the largest sum to date.

● PO Fiona Millington, LMEM Will Atkinson, Lt Alan Ainsworth and Lt Jack Frost at the finish line for the Lloyds Register 24-Peaks Challenge



you see your team? Go on, it's just a stroll..."

Find out more online at www.seafarers-uk.org.

■ THOSE who like to combine their charity work and their social lives will be pleased to hear that they can support maritime charity Seafarers UK whilst enjoying a tipple.

Brewers Fuller's will give five pence from every pint of Gales Seafarers Ale to the charity that supports all those who work on the sea.

The beer will be on offer as part of Fuller's Autumn Beer Festival.

Seafarers chairman Surg Vice Admiral Ian Jenkins said: "The money raised from every pint will mean a great deal to those people who have devoted their lives to working at sea and who have fallen on unfortunate times."

Break time in Gosport

FORCES' parents of young children in the Gosport area are welcome to take time out at the Crossley Centre in Rowner.

The Forces Family Community Group have set up an Open House on Thursdays, 10.30am to 3pm.

Organiser Shandrika Day said: "It's just somewhere anyone can go and take some time out from those magnolia walls and have a little – or a lot of – adult conversation for a while."

Find out more by contacting the centre on 023 9252 7424.



● Cdre John Keegan, commanding officer of HMS Raleigh, Paul Goodall and LPT Paul Andrew

Paul gets in a spin

FORMER Navy man Paul Goodall will be lapping the parade ground at HMS Raleigh for a ten-mile sponsored bike ride this month.

Paul, a double above-knee amputee, is hoping to raise £12,000 for the Royal British Legion and the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (BLESMA).

The 58-year-old will be using a specially-adapted wheelchair for the challenge, using his hands to pedal.

Raleigh's own physical training instructors have been helping Paul train with advice on fitness and exercise.

Paul said: "I spent many an hour on Raleigh's parade ground when I was here for basic training and it is good to be back on familiar ground."

"I want to prove to people that there is life after losing a limb. This bike ride is my way of giving something back to the organisations that have supported me."

The money is intended to buy two wheelchairs for use by ex-Service men and women, and for rehabilitation.

Anyone wishing to sponsor Paul should contact him at pgoodall3@toucansurf.com or 01752 814248.

Historic Flight in stitches

A DETAILED embroidery of the Royal Navy's Historic Flight is up for bids to raise money for the veteran aircraft.

Embroiderer Pamela Roberts has designed and created the large tapestry, featuring well-known aircraft from the unit.

Pamela said: "To me not only is it so important to keep these magnificent machines flying, for the pleasure of the public, and a tribute to those brave pilots and engineers to whom we owe so much, but a tribute to my late father who served with some of them for many years."

This is the first of Pamela's many attractive works that have been offered for sale, and she is hoping to raise over £1,000.

To find out more contact Katie Campbell on 01935 456279 or e-mail hfbcc@yeovilton.mod.uk.

Gold in sight for Lee

HMS COLLINGWOOD is helping one man fight for his dream of Special Olympic Gold.

Lee Cox, aided by £1,100 raised from a charity golf day, will be representing Great Britain in the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai this October.

Lee, who lives with learning disabilities and nocturnal seizures, is a helmsman of a laser 2000 boat who regularly competes in this field.

Lee won a silver medal in Glasgow last year and now has his sights set on gold for this year's event.



● WO John Laird, Surg Cdr Richard Webber and John Bellshaw with the kittens

A purrrr-fect ending

PLAINTIVE mewing at Clyde's South Gate drew the attention of MOD Guards who spotted a feline family in need of help.

They called in the base's environmental health team, whose pest control officer John Bellshaw went to investigate.

Three kittens and a mother cat were taken into his protective custody – "The mother cat was less than impressed at being caught," said John.

"In fact she tore around my office and just about destroyed it – but the feral cats on the base are totally wild and she was just very frightened."

After two weeks of gentle handling, the kittens have taken to their human hosts and are heading to new homes with families.

The mother cat – now neutered – has been let loose again where she is caring for her one remaining kitten.

Head of occupation health Surg Cdr Richard Webber helped care for their feline guests for a week. He said: "When I first met the kittens they really were very timid, as you might imagine."

"But they're little characters now and perfectly used to being handled."

"We always urge anyone who spots new cats or kittens on the base or injured animals or birds to immediately contact us so that we can take proper care of them."

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Somerset nights

THIS is the spectacular moment the 163rd Dartmouth Royal Regatta reached its stunning finale.

It would have been unthinkable to have staged a regatta in the spiritual home of the Senior Service's officer corps without a Royal Navy warship anchored in the River Dart.

And so, as it has done through the decades, the Royal Navy provided a guardship for the maritime festival in the shape of the good ship Somerset, looking spick and span after her recent refit.

Tides in south Devon forced the frigate to sail up the Dart relatively early.

Expecting a quiet arrival, the ship instead was greeted by hundreds of locals lining the waterfront in Dartmouth and Kingswear.

Those who didn't catch such a sight on a glorious late summer's morn would certainly have known about it; the saluting gun responded to a welcome from the Dartmouth Yacht Club by firing nine times, its boom echoing around the narrow confines of the Dart valley.

Somerset dropped anchor mid-river but this proved no obstacle to 2,000 members of the public who wished to view the Type 23 frigate; they were ferried across from the quayside to enjoy free guided tours.

The ship and her sailors were not

merely here to look pretty, however. There were events on the water – notably gig racing – and off the water – including a barrel run, trolley dash and 'don't spill the beer' race – to take part in.

The Somerset teams, we're told, "made a good fist of it"... but the locals proved more adept at most of the sporting events, not least because many spend the year practising for the regatta.

And while much of the ship's primary functions were not required on the Dart, the operations room was a hive of activity every afternoon.

The Black Cats, the RN's Lynx helicopter display team, opened the festival, while displays by the RAF's Typhoon fighter, Chinooks and the Red Arrows were performed in the Dartmouth skies; their actions were co-ordinated from Somerset.

"Perhaps the lasting memory for the tens of thousands of visitors to this small town was the glorious sight of HMS Somerset forming the backdrop to the magnificent fireworks display," said Somerset's CO Cdr Rob Wilson.

"This was a visit none of the ship's company will forget for a long time, chiefly because of the wonderfully warm and friendly welcome they received from the public, who clearly still have a place in their hearts for today's Royal Navy."

↴ Ship of the month, page 12



● Ron Oakley

RNBT aid arthritic veteran

81-YEAR-OLD widower Ron Oakley spent six years serving with NAAFI, taking part in the Dieppe raid when only 17, before joining the Royal Navy in 1948. He went on to complete 22 years as a Leading Sick Berth Attendant, serving worldwide from Haslar to Australia, and his last ship was HMS Belfast. Ron has had two hip and one knee replacement operations and has very bad arthritis in his other knee. He struggles with stairs, and has a care worker in the mornings and evenings to help with his daily routine. His physical condition was beginning to cause Ron problems with stairs, even with help. He asked for assistance in funding a stair-lift that was turned down by the local authority as he lives in rented accommodation. Social Services agreed to fund half the cost, but Ron did not have the £1,994.50 necessary to fund his share of the cost. The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, who provide grants to serving and ex-serving RN ratings and RM other ranks, paid the balance for the stair-lift to be installed, giving Ron the freedom to use the whole house. Ron said, "Its wonderful. If it hadn't been for RNBT I'd have to move my bed down here to sleep." "Now I can go up and down as I please, to fetch things I need. "I very much appreciate the help I have had from RNBT, so that I have a bit of independence back again". For more information, contact RNBT at Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN, tel: 023 9266 0296, email: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk, or see website www.rnbt.org.uk

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN? To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse at Fleet Media Ops on 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr Harvey Burwin at DPR(N) on 9621 85984.



The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

Registration days are sealed with a X

MEMBERS of the Armed Forces will be attending a Registration Day this month – a special event aimed at getting more Service personnel on the electoral register.

Every unit will hold a Registration Day during October, which will be organised by the Unit Registration Officer – a person who has been appointed in each unit to provide information and advice on electoral registration to those in his or her unit.

On Registration Day, every person in the unit will be told about how to register to vote and have the opportunity to ask questions.

Registration leaflets will also be distributed, and some units in Great Britain will be visited by an electoral registration officer from the local authority.

The day forms the focal point of an information campaign which was launched in September with the mailing out of hundreds of thousands of registration forms to Service personnel

Lt Cdr Alan Dinham, who is leading the campaign and organising a Registration Day at the Ministry of Defence's Main Building in Whitehall, said: "Registering to vote is quick and easy, but we recognise that our Services have very little spare time in which to get this done.

"We hope Registration Day will provide the opportunity for everyone in the Forces to spend a few minutes of their day finding out about electoral registration and completing the form to secure their vote at election time."

Stephen Rooney, Director of Communication at the Electoral Commission, said: "By voting in an election you are having your say on what matters to you, whether



● X marks the spot: watch out for a Registration Day at your unit this month

that's local services in your home town or the way in which the country is run.

"A General Election can be called at any time – we hope Registration Day will serve as a reminder that you can only vote if you are registered to do so."

There are currently local elections planned for May 1 2008 across the whole of Wales, in 164

areas of England, and for the London Mayor and Assembly.

Speculation also continues about the possibility of a snap General Election, which could take place at any time.

Service personnel based in the UK can register in the same way as ordinary electors, by filling in and returning the annual canvass form, while those who are based, or likely

to be posted, abroad are advised to register as 'Service Voters'.

Due to a recent change in legislation, people registering as Service Voters will only have to register every three years instead of annually.

More information about registering and a downloadable registration form can be found at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk



● Beth George

Ship visit supremo rewarded

BETH George, from the Naval Regional Commander Northern England Staff, was one of the two recipients of this term's awards for efficiency across the Second Sea Lord's business area.

Working as Ship Visit Manager in the busy regional HQ, Beth has brought new practices to the area of ship support, ensuring value for money whilst focusing on service at the customer delivery point.

Beth is a Merseyside native who joined the Civil Service some 18 months ago, since which time she has worked in the regional HQ, managing the many aspects of multinational warship visits throughout the north of England, on both the west and east coasts.

The award was presented to her by Cdre John Madgwick, Naval Regional Commander Northern England.

Helping get acquainted

MAKING sure new recruits are well-prepared for HMS Raleigh is the job of the RN Acquaint Centre at HMS Caledonia in Rosyth.

And the fledgling Scottish unit is now looking for a volunteer to help ensure RN rating candidates are ready for 'life in a blue suit'.

For the RNAC billet there is generally a four-day week, and any branch, Leading Hand and above, would be considered.

For further details contact Lt Mark Ruston, RNAC(N), Drake Block, HMS Caledonia, Hilton Road, Rosyth KY11 2XH, tel 9335 65153.

Navigate your payslip

1: Pay Spine should be OF Main for direct entry Officers; OCFR for SUY Officers; OR Main for Ratings. The Current Grade Step level followed by the highest level available within rank/rate.

2: Total Pay for the month: Gross Pay = Pay before tax; Nlable Pay = Amount of monthly pay that is subject to National Insurance Deductions; Taxable Pay = Amount of monthly pay that is subject to Tax Deductions.

3: Amounts of Pay, Tax, National Insurance for the current Tax year, commencing April 1.

4: If you have decided to split your net pay between different bank accounts then the amounts will be shown. It is important to note that split of net pay will take place on all pay runs and not just the end of month pay run.

5: LSA payment for the current month.

6: LSA payment for a previous period. Details will be reflected in the Payroll Information section.

7: LOA payment for the current month.

8: Get You Home arrears for an amount which was overpaid in a previous month. Details will be reflected in the Payroll Information section. This is probably due to the ship sailing after the payroll deadline and is likely be countered by payment of LSA.

9: Married Quarter and Council Tax arrears for an amount which has yet to be charged. Numerous causes

EXPLANATION OF THE HARD COPY PAYSIP						
JPA E017		Statement of Salary and Deductions			AUG 2007	
Name BLOCKS		Paid Rank AB1	Organisation / Unit HMS SEAWORTHY		Pay Date 31-AUG-07	Page 1 of 1
NI Number AB123456C	Employee No. 30001234	Spine / Level of Max Available OR Main / Level 4 of 9 [1]		Payroll Type REG		
Tax Basis: Cumulative		Tax Code: 503L	NI Category: D	Uniform Tax Relief: 0.00		
Balances Current Period [2]		Value	Balances Current Tax Year [3]		Value	
Gross Pay PTD		2024.08	Gross Pay YTD		9899.45	
Niable PAY PTD		2206.34	Niable PAY YTD		9675.65	
Taxable PAY PTD		2205.34	Taxable PAY YTD		9670.65	
			PAYE YTD		1008.12	
Split Amount [4]		Pay Method	Exchange Rate	Bank Details	Payment	
500.00		BACS	1.0000 GBP	456078 / 00057932	1692.80	
718.16		BACS	1.0000 GBP	110602 / 00545454		
Total Payments:		2024.08	Total deductions	805.921	Net Pay: 1218.16	
Pay and Allowances		Value	Charges and Deductions		Value	
Basic Pay		1499.46	PAYE		334.58	
LSA [5]		466.24	NI D		198.74	
LSA Arrears [6]		240.64	Acom CH (Qtr) [16]		108.81	
LOA [7]		13.58	CILOCT (Qtr)		87.83	
GYH (M) Arrears [8]		-59.84	Service Charity Monthly		1.00	
Acom CH (Qtr) Arrears [9]		-126.36	LSAP Deduction [17]		70.83	
CILOCT (Qtr) Arrears [9]		-101.98	LSAP Insurance		1.13	
GPD Non Taxable [10]		-288.18	Sports Lottery		3.00	
GPD Offset Non Taxable [11]		380.52				
Payroll Information			Other Balances		Value	
Contact your Unit HR Admin immediately on arrival at a new duty station to ensure the Arrival Process is completed - failure to do so may affect your Pay [12]			GPD [18]		92.34	
			LSAP [19]		5879.29	
			LSA (Shown in Days) [20]		1459.00	
GYH (M) Arrears		16-JUL-07 - 31-JUL-07	-59.84 [13]	<div>● This payslip example has been designed by the RN JPA Support Team to assist in understanding the entries on monthly payslips. The amounts are merely to show how pay, allowances and charges are likely to appear on the payslip; they should not be used as a guide to expected charges/allowances. Guides to pay and allowances and eligibility criteria can be found in JSP 752 (Tri-Service Regulations for Allowances) and JSP 754 (Regulations for Pay and Charges). The notes should be read in conjunction with this payslip. You should contact your UPO if you are concerned about any aspect of your monthly payslip.</div>		
LSA Arrears		16-JUL-07 - 31-JUL-07	240.64			
MQ Arrears		26-JUN-07 - 30-JUN-07	-17.55			
CILOCT Arrears		01-JUL-07 - 31-JUL-07	-108.81			
LSA at level 5 etc [14]		26-JUN-07 - 31-JUN-07	-14.15			
Basic Pay : Annual Salary		01-JUL-07 - 31-JUL-07	-87.83			
(TBD 20-MAY-01) [15]			(AIP Available 2)			
== End of Pay Statement ==						

for charges to not be deducted on time, however it is the individual's responsibility to ensure that they are being charged appropriately and to report incorrect charges to the JPAC(EC) via I-Support. Details will be reflected in the Payroll Information section.

10: The payroll process will group together all taxable debts and also group together all non-taxable debts. These debts will then be recovered at a maximum rate of four days gross pay per month.

If the debt is greater than four days gross pay the amount will be offset, with the remainder being deducted the following month.

11: Whilst it may appear that arrears have been deducted twice the offset amount will either be equal to or greater than the actual amount owed, resulting in the correct amount being deducted.

12: This section is used to publish important notices that affect all three Services.

13: Details of all payments/

deductions from a previous month that have reflected in the current month.

14: Shows what level LSA has been paid for the current month.

15: Incremental Base Date – this is usually the date you entered your current rank, if this date is within the current month and before the payroll process is run then you should see a pay rise, providing you meet the other criteria. If it is in the current month but falls after the pay run then the pay rise will be

reflected (and back-dated) in the following month's pay.

16: Accommodation and associated charges, plus food charges will appear for the current month.

17: LSAP and LSAP Insurance deductions for the current month.

18: Details of any outstanding debts will be listed in the other balances column. The outstanding debts will usually be deducted over the following months.

19: Amount of LSAP outstanding.

20: Number of days LSA accrued.

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

Drafty is looking for augmentees

THE Naval Service is playing a significant role in ongoing joint operations in Iraq and Afghanistan which are currently Defence's highest priority.

Whilst the RN's main contribution remains the deployment of 3 Commando Brigade RM and Naval Air Squadrons, as part of the Joint Force Harrier and Commando Helicopter Force, the Naval Service is also providing a significant number of individual augmentees.

These augmentees are co-ordinated by the DNPERS Augmentation and Crisis Manpower (ACMP) section in consultation with Career Managers.

The RN has a remit to provide 25 per cent of the additional personnel required to support ongoing joint operations.

This means that the RN currently has around 360 personnel, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This includes RN, RNR, RM and RMR officers, senior rates and junior rates/other ranks from all branches who serve in a wide variety of specialist and general positions in a number of different locations and units, including multinational HQs, regional land HQs and regional maritime component commands.

The number of Naval Service personnel deployed will probably increase to around 450 by mid-2008.

In addition to Joint duties, there are temporary surges in the requirement, mainly in support of 3 Commando Brigade's periodic deployment to Afghanistan as the Helmand Task Force.

The vast majority of personnel who deploy find these OPTOURS both interesting and challenging; they also provide RN personnel with a rare chance to experience front-line Joint operations.

Personnel generally undertake six-month OPTOURS which are immediately preceded by specific theatre-related training and followed by a period of post-operational tour leave (POTL).

You can volunteer for an OPTOUR by contacting your Career Manager or by selecting 'OPS' in the employee preference area in JPA.

You can also ask your unit HR manager to nominate you for the High Readiness Cadre of Augmentees (HRC) – 2006DIN02-335 refers.

RNPT tour dates

DATES and details of the RN Presentation Team's events for the coming months are:

- Weds Oct 3: Hotel Bristol, Narrowcliff, Newquay;
- Thurs Oct 4: Barnstaple Hotel, Braunton Rd, Barnstaple;
- Tues Oct 9: University of Gloucestershire Park Campus, The Park, Cheltenham;
- Weds Oct 10: Warwick Racecourse, Hampton St, Warwick;
- Tues Oct 23: Macclesfield Town Hall, Macclesfield;
- Tues Nov 27: The Guildhall, Market Place, Salisbury;
- Weds Nov 28: Center Parcs, Longleat Forest, Warminster;
- Tues Dec 4: Nottingham Gateway Hotel, Nuthall Rd, Nottingham;
- Weds Dec 5: Chesterfield Hotel, Malkin St, Chesterfield.

Anyone wanting to book a place at a presentation should contact the RNPT on 020 8833 8020 or email rnpt@gtnet.gov.uk

Insurance claim

VICTORY Financial Services have added motor insurance to their range – and they claim it is specially-designed to meet the needs of Service personnel.

Call 0800 05 56709 for details.

Veterans' badges top half-million mark

TWO special ceremonies marked the presentation of the 500,000th Armed Forces Veterans' Badge.

At the top of Blackpool Tower the town's mayor, Cllr Robert Wynne, handed five badges to local veterans, while in London, on board HMS Belfast, Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg handed over the half-millionth badge itself to Sonia Hartford, who served in the Army.

Availability of the badge, created in 2004, has

been gradually extended to those who served at any time up until December 31 2004.

Gerry Mulrooney, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency Deputy Director of Pensions, said: "From our Blackpool offices and our other centres across the country, the SPVA provides help and support to anyone who has served in HM Armed Forces, whether young or old, male or female."

"I'd encourage anyone interested in applying

for a Veterans Badge to call our veterans helpline on 0800 169 2277 as we might also be able to help with other problems or issues they have in life."

Postal applications should be sent to Veterans Services, SPVA, Norcross, Blackpool, FY5 3WP, with name, address, date of birth, service number, period of service and theatres of service. For more details see the website at www.veterans-uk.info

Engineering students can test their mettle

BUDDING engineers and technical specialists in the Armed Forces have been testing their mettle on a training exercise in Wales.

Students who aim to join the Forces or Civil Service can be sponsored by the Ministry of Defence to study IEng or CEng-accredited engineering degree programmes, providing an environment in which all aspects of military life are introduced as well as engineering training.

The Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS) has five partnerships, with the universities of Aston (Taurus Squadron), Loughborough (Typhoon Sqn), Newcastle and Northumberland (both Trojan Sqn) and Southampton (Thunderer Sqn).

But in 2006 it was recognised that there was a need for a post-DTUS pre-Initial Officer Training (IOT) training exercise to focus minds and to highlight areas of weakness.

So in came Exercise Thor's Revival, in which the Class of 2007 had the chance to prove themselves on the Sennybridge Training Area in mid-Wales.

Thor's Revival involved arduous navigation stages interspersed with demanding command tasks, culminating in a gruelling endurance race.

The exercise began at 6am in strong winds and torrential rain with an 18.4km navigation exercise covering 18.4km, to be completed in six hours.

All but one team managed the undulating forest course in time – but there was no time to reflect, as



● DTUS graduates take a breather during Exercise Thor's Revival at Sennybridge in Wales

the teams were then transported to their respective start points for the main part of the exercise.

This involved a round-robin of tasks spread over four days, with each student assuming leadership for at least 12 hours.

The tasks were:

- 1 Orienteering over 5km in dense woodland
- 2 Research and a 15-minute presentation on a past military leader
- 3 Search and rescue in a simulated smoke-filled environment
- 4 Ropework and construction, building a medieval-style weapon

to fling a 2lb projectile – some of the results were less than spectacular

5 Military standards and planning, in which students set up a room for an IOT-style inspection.

The total distance covered over the four days, in which teams had to be self-sufficient, was almost 60km, but everyone passed the test.

The final 8km endurance race – with students carrying logs and ammunition boxes across boggy ground and over steep slopes, with one water crossing – pushed them to the limits, but once again the

teams completed the course, the slowest finishing in just over an hour.

The six-day exercise imposed strict penalties for poor timekeeping – either early or late arrivals – and the need for time to eat and sleep had to be planned into each team's programme.

As well as giving students the chance to see how they would cope with IOT, it also gave DTUS staff the chance to see how the training administered by the university squadrons was meeting the needs of both the students and the Forces/Civil Service.

Naval to the core

SECOND Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns has formally announced a set of Core Values and Standards for the Naval Service.

As reported in *Navy News* in April, when the Navy Board endorsed the initiative, the 'Core Values and Standards' are designed to clearly show what the Naval Service, as an organisation, expects from its people, laying down an unambiguous set of guidelines on behaviour and attitudes.

It recognises the high reputation of the Navy, based largely on a fighting spirit, a "can-do" attitude, and high standards of professionalism, behaviour and self-discipline in sailors and marines down the centuries.

By volunteering for the Naval Service they accept that they will put the needs of the Service before their own, and will therefore forego some of the rights enjoyed by civilians – and in return they can expect to be treated fairly and with dignity at all times, to be valued and respected as an individual, and to be rewarded by terms and conditions of service which take account of their special circumstances.

In short it relies on mutual trust.

The core values are commitment, courage, discipline, respect for others, integrity and loyalty.

The initiative expects Naval personnel to lead by example by living the core values and demanding that subordinates do likewise, building on the teamwork ethos of the Service.

Diversity award

CIVIL servants employed by the Royal Navy have won an award for their work on disability.

Civilians working for CINCFleet Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent have been judged Southern Regional Winner in the 'Large' employer category by Remploy as part of its annual *Leading the Way* awards.

The awards recognise outstanding employers who have made significant efforts to encourage diversity within their organisations and who are adopting best practice and progressive thinking in the employment of disabled people.

Staff in the civilian Equality and Diversity team at the RN HQ were joined by members of the organisation's Disability Action Forum to be presented with the award on board HMS Victory by Dave Knight, Remploy's Head of External Relations.

The organisation will now compete with six other regional winners at the National Awards final, held in London this month.

Mr Knight said: "The calibre of entries this year has been extremely high and I congratulate the Civil Service division of the Royal Navy for demonstrating to other employers the benefits of a diverse workforce."

Remploy is an organisation that provides specialist employment services for disabled people and those who face complex barriers to employment.

Options after Ops

FIVE RNR officers attended the Young Reserve Officers' Workshop at the Inter-allied Confederation of Reserve Officers (CIOR) summer congress at Riga, looking at re-integrating Reservists on return from operations.

Some 60 young officers from across NATO meet annually to discuss current defence issues relating to NATO and Reservists.

Briefing notes prepared by groups for presentations will be used by the President of the CIOR, Canadian Capt Carman McNary, to help make recommendations to NATO's Military Committee.

The RNR officers were S/Lt Sarah Calhaem (HMS Forward), Lt Anouchka Peacock (HMS Eagle), Lt Adam Slonecki (HMS President, team leader), S/Lt Laura Harrison and Lt Hannah MacKenzie (both HMS Wildfire).

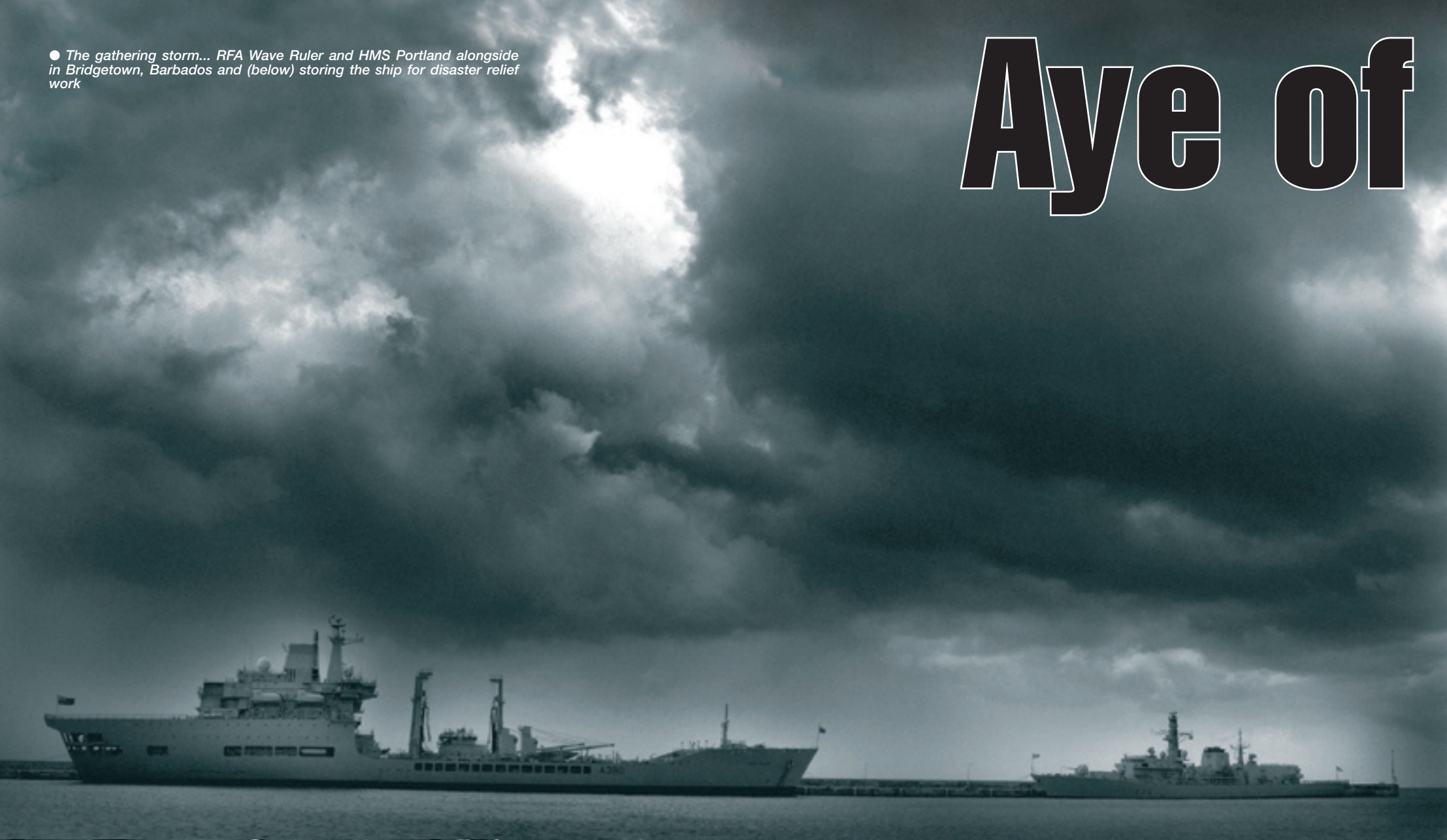


● A newly-restored painting by George Reinagle in the Trophy Store at HMS Nelson depicts the last battle fought under sail by the Royal Navy – the Battle of Navarino in October 1827. A combined British, French and Russian fleet fought a Turkish-Egyptian fleet during the 1821-32 War of Greek Independence. Under the 1827 Treaty of London the three nations were committed to enforcing peace, and while Greece agreed to an armistice, Turkey did not. Vice Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, CINC Mediterranean, was committed to cutting Turkish supply routes to Greece, and on October 20 Codrington moved his fleet into the Bay of Navarino, now known as Pylos. A Turkish ship opened fire, and Codrington, on board HMS Asia, responded. In four hours the Turkish-Egyptian fleet was devastated; no Allied ships were lost



● The gathering storm... RFA Wave Ruler and HMS Portland alongside in Bridgetown, Barbados and (below) storing the ship for disaster relief work

Aye of



FOR more than a week, Hurricane Dean threatened.

It grew stronger by the day as it swirled and spiralled across the Atlantic south of the Cape Verde Islands, inexorably heading westwards. Destination: Caribbean.

And as the weather forecasters plotted Dean's course, so the signals were flashed to Her Majesty's Ship Portland and her partner in crime-fighting, RFA Wave Ruler: *prepare for disaster relief*.

The duo had spent the summer prowling the Caribbean for drug-traffickers.

Such police actions were put to one side as the duo followed Hurricane Dean's path, steaming in its wake, constantly changing their plans as Dean changed its course.

Initially, the duo were prepared to offer help in Montserrat... but the storm passed the island.

Dean then grew in intensity, reaching a Category Four storm (with gusts of up to 150mph) as it swirled for the Cayman Islands... but again the hurricane passed by, causing relatively minor damage.

Dean was not done, however.

As it continued westwards, it picked up yet more force, crashing into the Yucatan peninsula – and into northern Belize – as a Category Five storm (gusts in excess of 156mph).

Dean's landfall in Belize prompted a plea for assistance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

And while Portland and Wave

After days of hanging on to the coat-tails of Hurricane Dean, the men and women of RFA Wave Ruler and HMS Portland were called upon to clear up in its wake after it bludgeoned its way through the Central American country of Belize. **Lt Cdr Harry Palmer**, Portland's Weapon Engineer Officer, and **3/O Jamie Smith**, Wave Ruler's Deputy Logistic Supply Officer, report on the duo's deeds.



Ruler made haste for the coast of the Commonwealth country, a team from the British Army Training and Support Unit Belize (BATSUB) headed into the area struck by the hurricane.

The BATSUB soldiers were the first to arrive on the scene in the village of Xaibe, home to around 200 souls, followed shortly afterwards by a recce party flown in by the two ships.

Among that first batch was LLOGS(CS(D)) – aka leading steward – Scotty Jackson. He arrived in Belize “not knowing what to expect from a village which had suffered severe devastation.”

He had been due to fly home to the UK on leave, but opted to stay with Portland and help with the rescue mission.

“Being the first to arrive on the ground, we had to take the task by the scruff of the neck,” he added.

The sailors and Royal Marines quickly set up their headquarters in the village primary school, complete with sleeping quarters, an operations centre and sickbay, while engineers set up lighting and sanitation using the disaster relief equipment carried by the ships.

While the HQ was established, a small team drove around the region to assess the damage.

Amazingly, despite Dean's ferocity, there were no casualties as a direct result of the hurricane in the entire Corozal district – but many dwellings were damaged so the most urgent need was for emergency shelter.

HMS Portland's medical officer, Surg Lt Carolyn Gibbens, was immediately inundated with locals requiring assistance – the hurricane had prevented their usual weekly visit by a local doctor.

The makeshift clinic was kept

busy for most of the first full day on the ground, with a variety of minor injuries and feverish children making up the bulk of the work.

Many residents of surrounding villages were isolated due to fallen trees and electricity pylons blocking the roads.

CPO(UW) ‘Arty’ Shaw headed a team of three (very) recently qualified chainsaw operators who managed to clear the roads, aided by the Army's heavy-lifting kit.

It proved to be a tough job – especially for such a small team. But within a few hours, all the major roads in the district were open once more.

Meanwhile, a team of four drivers were also dispatched to BATSUB headquarters to pick up three Land Rovers and a four-ton truck laden with roofing material.

The two-hour journey turned into a four-hour adventure on some rough roads (to say the least). Portland's clubz LPT Dai Jones was overheard rather acidly commenting: “I think this where we send Land Rovers to die – these are definitely on their last legs.”

The two Lynxes of 815 NAS attached to the ships were in constant demand, ferrying supplies and people from ship to shore (each flight took 40 minutes).

Outwardly Wave Ruler might appear to be a tanker, but she also carries scores of stores – 145 line items in the emergency relief store for a start, from chainsaws and wheelbarrows to tents, blankets and jump leads.



● A tug prepares to help HMS Portland into Bridgetown in Barbados and (left) a pause for reflection for LS Karimlar as Portland comes alongside





● *Portland's and Wave Ruler's sailors plus British Army personnel help to shift trees battered by Hurricane Dean*
Pictures: LA(Photos) Luis Holden and Owen King, FRPU Whale Island

As well as clearing roads, the chainsaw operators were employed removing trees and pylons which had fallen on to homes, wrecking roofs and, in many cases, the entire house.

Some had fallen in such a way that they were in danger of collapsing further, causing more damage or badly injuring children playing close by.

Teams travelled around the villages repairing or replacing damaged roofs.

Very often the inhabitants were on hand to help, which meant teams could move quickly on to the next house.

The diverse nature of the work on the ground called for a wide range of people to come ashore with specialist skills, but when it came to shifting stores and nailing tarpaulin to roofs and securing heavy sheets of corrugated iron, it was a case of all hands to the pump, whatever your expertise.

"I was on top of a house, helping to build a new roof and nearly fell through it," said PO(EW) Nick Morgan.

"Luckily, one of the local men who was helping me managed to grab my arm and hold me there."

One building that was home to a family of nine was damaged beyond repair.

Work started immediately with members of the Royal Navy, Army and RFA pitching in to build a new house for the family.

The plan was for a temporary shelter but the result was far from

temporary. The teams' handiwork was even inspected by Belize's Deputy Prime Minister, Vildo Marin.

Not all the building work proved quite so successful... or lasting, however.

"On the first evening, when all the teams were back at the camp, everyone tucked into their ration packs and bedded down on camp beds – some of which had the luxury of mosquito nets," said 3/O Smith.

"The highlight of that night was hearing a section of matelots screaming as the tarpaulin which they'd put up to keep the rain off fell in during a downpour."

The locals were overwhelmingly grateful for the efforts of the Service personnel ashore and were keen to provide any assistance necessary.

They even offered soft drinks, fresh fruit and coconut milk to keep the teams hydrated in the sweltering 100° heat. And they also showed the sailors how to get milk from a coconut without it spilling using only a machete.

This spurred the teams on in the knowledge that their efforts meant so much to the people affected and were making a big difference to their lives.

"The people were so happy to see us," said CPO Shaw.

"I could not believe how they handled such total devastation – if it was in our country, everyone would be blaming someone and

demanding compensation."

Not all the locals offered such a warm welcome.

"One of the families had a mongoose as a pet on a lead," recalled PO Morgan.

"They told me it was friendly – but it decided to try to attack my leg."

Although they were tired, the sailors wanted to battle on to give as much as possible to people who had so little.

While work continued ashore, everyone back on board was eager to get involved and do what they could to help.

The sterling efforts of the crew back on board Portland, expertly co-ordinated by the Executive Warrant Officer, Gary Smith, ensured that stores and personnel kept arriving.

The physically-exhausting work coupled with the extreme heat both during the day and at night meant that rotation of the teams was vital to sustain the operation.

In a very intensive four days, the two ship's companies were able to help nine villages as well as the town of Corozal itself, providing medical assistance to around 30 people, clearing scores of trees, repairing more than 60 houses and providing materials for a hundred or so more.

"As I left the island, I was content that the work I and my team had achieved would have taken the people months to do without us," said CPO Shaw.

ET(ME) Steven Seaby added:

"The thought of making a difference to somebody's or a family's life was exciting."

"Seeing their faces after we had helped to rebuild their homes gave us a real sense of achievement."

Portland's Commanding Officer Cdr Mike Utley said the men and women of Wave Ruler and Portland could feel justly proud about their accomplishments.

"Once again the value of Royal Naval training and the enthusiasm of the sailors ashore has shown we can make a real difference."

"Every member of the ships' companies left with the satisfaction that they had helped this remote area in a big way."

Barely had Hurricane Dean dissipated than a fresh cyclone threatened Belize in the shape of Hurricane Felix.

Once again Portland and Wave Ruler were on stand-by to intervene, but luckily for the Belizians they were spared Felix's wrath (the storm did, however, cause extensive damage in Nicaragua).

And so the duo have resumed their anti-drug patrols in the Caribbean alongside US and native law enforcement agencies.

● *(Right) all smiles from youngsters after a check-up from Portland's Surg Lt Carolyn Gibbens*

● *(Below right) A senior rating sweats in the heat as he fixes a roof*

● *(Below left) Carrying a pallet ashore from Portland*



Rare birds in the province

THE article 815 – *Banner waving* (September) brought back memories of Eglinton in the early 1950s.

We had the only two helicopters (Sikorsky Dragonflies) in Northern Ireland, so were a great talking point with the locals whenever they were seen.

Workers in the potato fields were quite happy to be covered in swirls of dust when the pilots hovered down over them.

The trawlers coming into Derry were most generous with our request on receiving a lowered wastepaper basket from the winch with the note: "A few sweets [tins from the B rations] for your children, any fish today please?"

Fresh fish was provided which was shared amongst the flight crews, ground and air.

One crewman actually shot at flying geese which was frowned upon by the wildfowling association, so it didn't happen again.

The good part about the flight was that due to lack of night flying instruments we only worked daylight hours, except of course for maintenance.

– P G 'Nobby' Clarke, FAA,
1947-1969, North Walsham,
Norfolk

Remember the Naval Parties

I READ with interest and a nostalgic view your Falklands 25 souvenir supplements.

It is disappointing to see that *Navy News*, with others, 'forgets' NP1810, along with NP2010.

You report that Stena Seaspread carried NP1850 with Capt D Ede. Capt Ede joined after June 14 to relieve Capt Mike Williams.

For accuracy Stena Seaspread sailed to the South Atlantic with three captains, Paul Badcock, Mike Williams and Bob Fitch (Nightmaster).

The ship carried two naval parties, NP1810 for ship repair and NP2010, a 13-strong diving team.

At most reunion events NP1810 has been forgotten, worse than that our diving team, NP2010, has been completely forgotten.

The naval parties and Stena Seaspread assisted more than half of the ships listed between April and June 1982 – 54 of 77.

– Alan Cross, CMEA (H)
NP1810, Cowplain

Still seeking perfection

I SEE that you added a cruiser to the Russian fleet (August page 10). But *Jane's Warship Recognition Guide* tells me the Admiral Chabanenko is a Udaloy II DDG, not a cruiser.

I do enjoy *Navy News*, especially your use of photos, but this one hurt.

Old editors never die, they just keep looking for the perfect issue. I did for 40 years in newspaper work.

– Kenneth R Norling,
Concord, New Hampshire, USA



● HMS Daring during her sea trials off the coast of Scotland

Daring's master and commander

MAY I commend Richard Hargreaves on his excellent article about HMS Daring (September) and what splendid pictures as well.

I just wish to chide Richard gently, as sadly we did not have the opportunity to speak during his day at sea.

His quote: "The rest of the crew from the

captain to the deck hands and the chefs were civvies" left me a little perplexed, as it might imply that I may have had no connection with the Senior Service.

After 33 years in the Service, which included three carrier tours as a Buccaneer pilot, I was appointed as an Admiralty Trials Master.

I had the privilege of commanding the

splendid Daring for a month and she was my 15th and final warship command.

I know I may be technically a 'civvie' on the retired list, but after 45 years at sea and wearing uniform in command of such a magnificent ship as the first of class, I felt very much part of the Senior Service indeed.

– Capt Ted Hackett, Petersfield

Stanley's morning surprise

REGARDING the names of the ships opposite Stanley, I was on HMS Protector, 1959-61, for two-yearly patrols of eight months, running south from Stanley.

Before we left Stanley to return to Portsmouth in March 1961, volunteers were asked to carry out 'Operation Nameplate' – to put the name *Protector* in white stones and rocks along the embankment opposite Stanley.

The work was carried out overnight to "surprise the residents of Stanley when they awoke in the morning and saw our work."

I believe the name *Canopus* was already on the embankment in memory of the World War 1 action when *Canopus* defended Stanley.

In 1968 when I visited Stanley again the names *Protector* and *Canopus* were no longer there but I do not know when they were removed, or by whom.

As an 'extra' on Protector 1959-61, one of the NAAFI staff was Bill Forfar, now aged 80. Bill returned to Stanley during the Falklands conflict and was 'drafted' into the RN for the duration, aged 55 years!

– Ian Middleton, Portsmouth



● Just Nuisance receiving some TLC – and possibly some beer – at Cape Hospital in South Africa in 1944. He was admitted suffering from paralysis of the sciatic nerve.

Bi'dog'raphy

RECENTLY I was lent a book by an ex-RM called *Just Nuisance AB: His Full Story* (which was greeted by my dog with a growl) and was, therefore, delighted to read the snippet with his photo in *Navy News*.

The book is by Terence Sisson with a foreword by Vice Admiral James Johnson and is one of the nicest books I have ever read.

If anybody is interested it is published by Flesch Publications, reprint-ed in April 2003 – ISBN 0 949989 51 7.

– I J Umfreville, Stratford St Mary, Suffolk

Crunch time is coming for shipmates

I THINK Admiral Shipmate John McAnally, the RNA President, (RNA, July) has underestimated the problem of the attrition rate among the association membership.

It may well be that the present rate of decline is 1,700 per year, and he projects a mathematical progression for future membership reduction.

However, it doesn't really work like that for, as the population ages, it reduces at an accelerating or exponential rate, so crunch time will come well before the ten years he suggests.

With regard to official numbers, "J" was indeed the Seaman branch, although I don't know what the "X" was for, but I do recall an old salt telling me that when the numbers were first introduced Seamen were referred to as "Jixers".

– John Lindop, former AB,
Duddon Common, Tarporey

A French letter

JE SUIS un fidèle lecteur de votre revue que j'apprécie énormément.

Je me permets de vous écrire pour vous signaler une petite erreur survenue à la page 32.

En effet, vous relatez un séjour à la mer sur le HMS Tyne malheureusement en bas de page la photo présentée n'est pas celle du HMS Tyne mais celle du patrouilleur des affaires maritimes française le Pam Themis (excellent navire par ailleurs).

Je vous souhaite une excellente journée dans l'attente de vous lire le mois prochain.

– Thierry Wenger, Cherbourg

Zut alors! M Wenger is quite right, one of our photos showed the French ship Pam Themis.

Still, it's good to know our friends across the channel are reading Navy News – Ed

Ocean was not the first

I BELIEVE that Lt Cdr Dave O'Shaughnessy was misguided when he stated that HMS Ocean "is the first ship built to commercial standards" (August).

I served in the previous Ocean from 1946-47 as a midshipman.

She was one of the Colossus-class of light fleet carriers built towards the end of the war.

We were told they were built to commercial standards as this was quicker and cheaper.

Twin screws with two machinery spaces, in echelons, each containing both boiler and turbine and without armour they were lightly constructed.

Some of your readers may be aware of even earlier precedents?

– Cdre John Torr, Kingston
Gorse, West Sussex

Softly awake the sparks

SO THE Rt Rev Eric Devenport recalled of his time at Royal Arthur "how delightful, kind and understanding the CPOs were." (RNA pages, September)

My CPO Telegraphist carried a large, confidential book in the class.

If on a hot day he noticed a rating dozing, or starting to, the CPO's lecture would change to: "You will notice that this confidential book is bound in lead to ensure that it sinks when thrown overboard, but it is also conducive to considerable pain upon impact" at which point the volume would crash down on the unfortunate rating's head.

How kind can you get?

– H 'Sparks' Crago,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts

Apache medals

WITH reference to Dr Lou Armour's letter (September) about medals not awarded to some personnel for the 'Apache Helicopter Mission' – I can give him a reason.

The personnel who *did* receive medals are MOD (Army) – those who did not are MOD (Navy).

– Mick Pinchen (former RM)
Chislehurst, Kent

opinion

RECRUITMENT to the Sea Cadets rose by four per cent last year, giving the lie to the commonly-held image of young people as aimless layabouts, or hoodies with criminal intent.

As Lt Cdr Roger Busby, from Sea Cadet Headquarters in London points out (*Letters*, opposite) adult volunteer instructors in the Sea Cadet units give their services free, unlike the Army Cadet Corps and Air Training Corps, who are paid for theirs.

Research by the Maritime Charities Funding Group has shown that 18 per cent of new entrants at HMS Raleigh have been Sea Cadets. And former Sea Cadets are more likely to complete their basic training than recruits without a cadet background.

Even if most Sea Cadets ultimately choose other careers, their time in their units is likely to have given them excellent grounding

in the Naval ethos of teamwork and self-reliance (not to mention the fun of canoeing, sailing, and all the other activities which tempt many to join in the first place.)

The report also shows that adult volunteer instructors spend on average more than 16 hours a week with their units – four times longer than the national average for voluntary work in the UK.

Of the 13,000 young people who are Sea Cadets at the moment, many will go on to become volunteer instructors at some stage of their lives – encouraged by the example of the adults in their units.

Our letters page is currently running a debate about whether their lace should be wavy or straight. While we at *Navy News* have no strong opinion about that, we do feel that the dedicated men and women of the RNRV deserve more recognition.

The views expressed in Navy News do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence



Diamonds are forever

RFA Mounts Bay and Daring-class destroyer HMS Diamond both featured in September's Navy News.

What unforgettable memories those names have for me.

I served aboard the Chatham-based frigate Mounts Bay (F627) on the Far East Station from July 1949 to March 1951.

I was 17 years of age when I joined her and 19 when I left. What a grand ship she was. I was very fond of her.

In April 1952, I and the rest of the newly-drafted Chatham-based ship's company left Chatham Dockyard aboard a specially-chartered steam train bound for Glasgow to commission a brand-new Daring-class destroyer, HMS Diamond (D35) at John Brown's shipyard, Govan.

On arrival we unpacked our kitbags and hammocks from the train and marched up the gangway and saluted the quarterdeck.

What a smart ship she was and so different from all the other destroyers in the Fleet.

I spent 18 months aboard her and enjoyed every minute.

In Leith in mid-August I was amazed to see a magnificent, gigantic RFA, her blue ensign fluttering proudly in the breeze, and wondered what her name was?

I wandered along the jetty, she was berthed port-side to.

Then I saw her name – Mounts Bay! I was transfixed. I was stood there and my eyes filled with tears.

It was very emotional and it made my day. As I read that name



● HMS Diamond photographed in 1962

again I saw in my mind's eye all those lads I knew all those years ago.

I shall never forget that feeling. And now, the new Diamond will soon be commissioned, like her much-remembered predecessor, at Govan.

Wonderful!

– Lt Joe Bowden (Retd)
Yatton, North Somerset

Proud to be a volunteer

IN HIS eagerness to scuttle the 'Wavy Navy' and consign another chapter of our naval heritage to the bin Lt Clifford (CCF) (*Letters*, August) misses the point.

Neither the ACF nor the ATC can draw upon such an iconic image as the RNVR – the essence of the volunteer.

That's a naval tradition worth passing on to the next generation.

In the Sea Cadet Corps we wear the RNVR 'wavy lace' with pride.

– Lt Cdr Roger Busby, RNR,
Sea Cadet HQ, London

...I FOR one am proud to wear the wavy lace, and I am sure that many of my colleagues would agree with me.

We, like the RNVR, give our time and enthusiasm free and so continue the proud traditions of the RNVR.

– Sub Lt (SCC) Tony Ingham
RNR, TS Euryalus, Oxford Sea
Cadet Corps

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

Given the impressive volume of

letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



Fairey's rotors

I WAS involved, in a small way, in the trials carried out in USS Antietam in July 1953 which Reg Gale refers to in his letter (September).

At the time I was the winchman of 771 Squadron ASR flight, operating from RNAS Ford with Sikorsky S51 Dragonfly helicopters.

The pilot was Lt Jones. Although the flight had two choppers, Lt Jones and I were the only crew.

On July 2 we were in the area of the trials in a safety role, in case any of the many other choppers carrying VIPs to the ship got into difficulties. Fortunately our expertise was not required.

– W G Ellis (former Ldg Tel(F)), Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire
...WITH reference to Mr Copson's letter (September) the MV-22 tilts the rotors (and engines) through 90 degrees to go from vertical take-off to horizontal flight.

The Fairey Rotodyne did not have a tilting rotor, the rotor was only used for take off and landing. Forward motion was by the two main engines with conventional propellers.

– W E Jones, Abergavenny

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● In action in the Clyde Sportsdrome for the base's Summer Soccer School

Football frenzy

THE SPORTSDROME at Clyde Naval Base played host to 15 football-mad children for the base's Summer Soccer School.

Sports staff Neil Vincent, Rob Greetham, Sticky Vercoe and Dizzy Dawson kept the youngsters on their toes, sharpening up their dribbling, passing and shooting skills.

The week culminated in a Mini World Cup tournament, with the children split into four different 'countries': Holland, Brazil, Ireland and Scotland.

As ever it seems, Brazil

triumphed in the battle of the soccer states, winning the coveted title of HMS Neptune Mini World Cup Champions.

Lt Cdr Billy Adams said: "The children's attitude and behaviour was impeccable throughout and, although there was quite a variation in age levels and ability, the footballers played harmoniously together."

Each child received a Summer School Soccer T-shirt, a certificate and a leather football at the successful completion of the week's hard work.

Catching memories of World War 2

VETERAN Henry Floyd died some years ago, but his daughter Trishia Welsh travelled to America to meet the former US Marine Norman Boike who was billeted with her steward father in HMS Hartland during World War 2.

While the fathers never met again, it was the daughters of both men who bumped into each other in the virtual world of the internet.

"Quite separately, Karen, Norman's daughter, and I had been searching on the internet for more information about HMS Hartland, and posted notices on a website," said Trishia.

"We started chatting by e-mail after that. I have always been interested in the ships that my father served on, but what happened to him on HMS Hartland has always been a mystery, as he said very little about it.

"So I made up my mind to come to meet Norman and find out more about that fateful day, November 8 1942."

Both men swam for their lives when the ship was bombed by the Vichy French at the entrance to Oran Harbour, Algeria.

Two days later, they were liberated by American troops, and Henry arrived home in the UK completely kitted out in American naval uniform.

The transatlantic trip has allowed Trishia to clear up some of the mysteries of her father's life, and allowed Norman to open up to his own family about his wartime experiences.

Norman said: "Although it was tough to talk about the terrible events of that night, I recognised how important it was for Trishia to understand more about her suffering. It was as if we had known each other for years."

By George! It's Peter...

A CHANCE meeting in Calgary brought to light an unexpected reunion between two Naval men for whom the years had wrought a few changes.

Bill Adamson joined the Navy in September 1960. While based at Collingwood training in the electrical branch, he got involved with the football team.

It was not until 44 years later when based at the Canadian Legion in Calgary, Alberta, that Bill was introduced to Peter Welsh, a fellow former matelot.

After several conversations between the new friends, they eventually realised that they might have been based together at the Fareham training establishment.

"Peter being a keen soccer player meant that our conversation often turned to the subject," said Bill.

"One day he mentioned how during our basic training it was hard to get uniforms so we often played in white fronts.

"I agreed and showed him an old picture (*see right*) I had of the team I played with at the time.

"Turning white he told me he had one just the same, and that he was second from left in the front row.

"I was second from left in the back row."

Peter – nicknamed, for reasons best known to the Navy, 'George' – Welsh went on to earn 36 caps playing for the Navy, plus several games for combined services.

Although faces may have changed somewhat in the intervening years, 'George's' distinctive forearm tattoo remains.



The duo are keen to know if any other faces from the Collingwood football team bring back old

memories – contact Bill by e-mail at badamson@telusplanet.net or telephone 001 403 251 7614.

Bravery at sea by MDP

MINISTRY of Defence Police officers who went to the rescue of American submariners swept into the sea off Devonport have been honoured with commendations for bravery and professionalism.

The 11 officers from the MDP Devonport Marine Unit went to the aid of the US Navy sailors when five were washed off the deck of the USS Minneapolis St Paul in December last year.

The police officers in two MDP launches and rigid inflatable boats (RIB) pulled three men from the water, a fourth climbed back on board the submarine and a fifth was picked up by one of the Plymouth pilot boats.

Despite the best efforts of the officers and medical staff, two of the sailors plucked from the water were declared dead on arrival at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth.

MDP Chief Constable Steve Love said: "These officers took what they had by way of training and equipment and dealt with an extraordinary situation in a remarkable way.

"Had it not been for their swift and heroic efforts I have no doubt the fatalities would have been higher."

Cdre Simon Lister, Devonport Naval Base Commander, said: "I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to these officers for the job they do, day in, day out, whatever the weather, and whatever the conditions.

"I think few people in the West Country realise that some of the best boat handlers in this area wear a police uniform.

"The bravery they displayed, the seamanship and the initiative were extraordinary."



Picture: Mike Cooper

Seeing red in dark blue

AN international team of divers have dived to the wreck of a merchant ship that played a role in Operation Pedestal.

Divers from Britain, Malta, Tunisia and Algiers headed down to a 54 metre depth to replace a red ensign on the merchant ship MV Glenorchy.

The ship was sunk on August 13 1942 during the dramatic Operation Pedestal relief effort for Malta.

She lies five miles off shore in Tunisian waters, still sitting fully upright.

Part of a secret convoy, Glenorchy was one of 14 ships that set sail from Scotland to Malta carrying food, diesel oil, coal and vital aviation fuel.

The convoy endured the most ferocious and heaviest bombardment of any during World War 2, but arrived eventually, battered and shattered, at its destination.

Expedition leader Simon Bennet said: "As a mark of respect to those killed on the ship and indeed to all merchantmen killed during the war, we placed an old Red Duster ensign on the decks of the wreck on behalf of the Merchant Navy Association."

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● James May and the Top Gear production team chat with sailors on board HMS Ark Royal

Picture: LA(Phot) Brett Turner

'Arking about May style

TOP GEAR's legendary antics have been taking place on board carrier HMS Ark Royal.

James May and his team arrived dockside with a Rolls-Royce Drophead Coupé to show off on the flightdeck.

The dull grey of the ship was a perfect backdrop to the shining grey of the car, and the carrier has

at least a nodding acquaintance with Rolls-Royce with its four Rolls-Royce gas turbines.

Once the sleek grey car had been craned ashore again, it disappeared off into the Hampshire countryside to finish its filming.

The new series of *Top Gear* is due to start on BBC2 from October 8.

Blanc check

Roll out the barrel... then lift it up, over and through the mud...

MASTER chef Raymond Blanc is known to be a tough taskmaster in the kitchen, but in his new BBC2 series *The Restaurant* he is running up against Royal Marine Cpl Jeremy Hooper.

In this new competitive show, nine couples run their own restaurants, under the close scrutiny of the award-winning restaurateur and the TV cameras.

And *Apprentice*-style, at the end of each week one restaurant is told to close its doors for good.

The Royal Marine, who spent eight years as a driver before retraining as a chef, has recently returned from a spell at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan.

Jeremy said: "It's massively different cooking in Afghanistan to cooking here in a restaurant."

"We were cooking for numbers of 1,500-2,000. And with 20 blokes in a shift you have to be able to delegate and know where your manpower is."

"But because your colleagues are military and know their job, it all runs smoothly."

He added: "But I found in a civvy kitchen things didn't run quite so smoothly – for example staff wouldn't turn up."

"In the Forces you can rely on people more."

Jeremy and his wife Jane are aiming high in the reality show.

"The opportunity is there for us to win, and if we do everything we know we can do, we will win," he said.

"Everyone else has hard competition to beat us."

The Royal Marine has one clear goal in mind: "When someone walks into my restaurant, the whole experience will be excellent – they will leave saying I want to go there again and that it's the best meal I've ever had."

● Cpl Jeremy Hooper RM and his wife Jane



Picture: BBC

Fists of Steel

BOXING champion Amir Khan dropped in to Portsmouth Naval Base to inspire youngsters on the Portsmouth Positive Future Project and promote the ABA European Schoolboy Boxing Championships which took place in the naval base last month.

Olympic silver medallist Amir met up with 20 from the Portsmouth project, saying: "I want to keep kids off the streets."

"Instead of hanging round the streets and getting in trouble, getting up to no good, why don't they get into a gym? It would do them some good. It will prepare them more, it will keep them fit, keep them stronger. Boxing teaches you discipline."

Amir is no stranger to the European Schoolboy Boxing Championship, having won the title himself four years ago.

He added: "As a past winner, I know that the standard of competition will be extremely high, with many competitors expected to be taking part in the London 2012 Olympics."

Cdre David Steel, Portsmouth Naval Base Commander, said: "Our boxing facilities are first rate which is why we are able to attract such high-profile events."

"It is fantastic that the Royal Navy, working with the ABA, council and university, have been instrumental in bringing the championships to Portsmouth."



● Hand in glove: Boxing champion Amir Khan and Cdre David Steel, Portsmouth Naval Base Commander, strike a pose before HMS Victory

Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams



THE famous Red and Green Life Machine at Ajax Bay proved a place of pilgrimage for five Naval medical officers who visited the derelict meat processing plant that was once home to Surg Cdr Rick Jolly and his team. The five (pictured above) – Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, Surg Lts Kate Roué, Charlie Hughes, Ed Barnard and Ali Morris – wondered if the occasion was the most medical officers here at one time in the last 25 years...?

ALTHOUGH barrel of laughs probably isn't best how members of Nottingham Rugby Club would describe the challenge of shoving a barrel across the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood.

Director of rugby for the National Division One team Glenn Delaney said: "During our week-long stay here we focused on heavy training and team building."

The players were split into four teams of seven.

And one of their challenges was to transport a barrel around the obstacle course without it touching the floor – over a high wall, across pools of water, up a steep tunnel and under a muddy cargo net.

The winning players team ("The Sherriffs of Nottingham") completed the task in 14 minutes – but victor's laurels still rest with the Navy who have set the record for completion at 10 minutes.



● Members of Nottingham Rugby Club tackle the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood

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Last salute for Sir Jeremy Moore

MAJOR General Sir Jeremy Moore, who died on September 15 aged 79, took the salute at the annual reunion of the Royal Marines Association at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone on the weekend before his death.

The officer came to wider public attention as the Commander of Land Forces during the Falklands War, but to his fellow Royal Marines he had long been a source of admiration during his varied and active career.

He initially joined the Royal Marines seeking to become a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, but was soon distracted when he realised that “marines are vastly more exciting, more interesting, and more rewarding to serve with than any piece of machinery.”

After an initial appointment to the cruiser Sirius, he served for three years with 40 Commando in the Malayan jungle, where he won his first Military Cross – he was, indeed, the third generation of his family to be awarded that particular honour.

After a series of training appointments, he saw action in the East again as a company commander with 42 Cdo during the Brunei revolt in 1962.

He led a company to rescue hostages from the rebels in Limbang – an action which won him a bar to his MC, and also the first time he saw action with the then Lt Jeremy Black, who would be captain of HMS Invincible during the Falklands conflict.

In the early 1970s, he commanded 42 Cdo with two tours in Northern Ireland, during Operation Motorman where the IRA’s ‘no-go areas’ were cleared and demolished.

From 42 Cdo, he headed up the Royal Marines School of Music, where he admitted that although he had no performing abilities himself, music was one of his principal pleasures.

He subsequently commanded 3 Cdo Bde before taking charge of all commando forces in 1979.

He was due to retire in 1982 and was just at the point of handing back command to the Commandant General Lieutenant General Sir Stuart Pringle, who had been recovering from the loss of a leg in an IRA attack, when the Argentinians began their invasion.

Basing himself initially at Northwood, Moore drummed a sense of amphibious warfare into the military staff there before flying south to Ascension Island to join the QE2 on route to the Falklands.

A failure in shipborne communication meant that he was incommunicado for ten days, but on arrival he



● Maj Gen Sir Jeremy Moore at the RMA reunion at CTCRM Lympstone in early September, the Commandant CTCRM Brigadier Andrew Salmon stands behind him

Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper

plunged into the land attack with characteristic Royal Marine grit, determination and good humour.

It was Moore, as Commander Land Forces, who took the surrender from the Argentine General Mario Menéndez, signalling home: “The Falkland Islands are once more under the government desired by their inhabitants; God save the Queen.”

■ SUBMARINERS can pay their respects to the late Vice Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch at a memorial service on Friday October 26 at a venue to be confirmed. Details from the secretary of the RN Submarine Museum on 02392 765250 ext 225.



NOTICEBOARD

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the October headlines of past decades...



● HMS Gavinton's Junior Rabbit Grobblington ended his seagoing career in 1977

40 years ago

A NAVY man went to the rescue of a baby seal stranded on the mudflats outside HMS Lochinvar.

POE1 Eric Payne, of the establishment's Base Maintenance Party, found the baby seal stranded and under attack by seagulls.

A diet of milk and sardines soon brought the orphaned mammal back to a picture of health.

After flourishing in its temporary home of the loop shed at Lochinvar, the seal was due to be released back into the waters of the Forth to return to its natural – non-military – habitat.

30 years ago

THERE are certain stories that we know will strike a chord in the hearts of many readers – and in October 1977, we reported DCI(RN) J575 that ordered “Land your warm-blooded mammals forthwith.”

And so ended the era of the shipborne cats, dogs, rabbits and other mammalia.

HMS Gavinton's pet Junior Rabbit Grobblington ended his seagoing career on this date, sadly missed by the ship's company – although no other warm-blooded mammalian seafarer is listed (sailors were excluded from this stricture as they were not subject to the rabies order).

20 years ago

THE HIGHLY unusual sculpture pictured below was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum from artist Graham Ashton.

The fee of £3,000 and a three-day visit on board HMS Valiant produced a work of art that apparently “express the functional beauty of the apparatus on board”, with “a sensuous evocation of liquid”.

Despite Navy News' best efforts, the opinions of the submariners it canvassed were unfortunately unprintable...

And even the Imperial War Museum admitted that it was “a little more abstract than we anticipated.”



● 'The Job of a British Nuclear Submarine'... apparently, according to its artist Graham Ashton

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■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Deaths

Vice Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch DSO, DSC. Joined RN as a special entry cadet 1931, served as midshipman in Royal Oak, Boadicea and Devonshire; six years later specialised in submarines. At outbreak of war he was in submarine Clyde; passed the 'Perisher' in 1940; commanded Splendid during the Allied landing in North Africa (Operation Torch), sinking more tonnage than any other submarine, but sunk by a German destroyer – he remained on board until sure no one left alive and would sink; hauled from the water into a German motorboat. Several escape attempts before success, mentioned in dispatches. SOO in 4th Cruiser Squadron; CO frigate Fernie; CO of 4th Submarine Division in Sydney, 1949; two years as director of Underwater Warfare Division; CO of Lion from 62-64. Admiral President of RNC Greenwich, Flag Officer Submarines, and FOSNI. One of the founders of *Navy News*, editor of *The Naval Review* 1972-80 and wrote *An Affair of Chances: a Submariner's Odyssey, 1939-44* (1991) and *The Princely Sailor: Mountbatten of Burma* (1996). Active interest in many nautical associations and a member of the Queen's Body Guard for Scotland, the Royal Company of Archers, 1969-2003. Association of RN Officers, August 12. Aged 93.

Rear Admiral Robin Mayo. Training in Ramillies and Venturous as a midshipman in the RNR and qualified in submarines, but considered too old for submarine service by 1938 when he joined the RN so specialised in anti-submarine warfare. At outbreak of war in depot ship Medway in Hong Kong laying submarine detection equipment; then became anti-submarine training officer in Scotland. Commanded the sloop Aberdeen and seven ships of the 56th Escort Group based in Sierra Leone. In 1947-48 he commanded Chevron on the Palestine Patrol and later covered the withdrawal of British forces from Palestine. XO of the carrier Theseus (Korea) then the first captain-in-charge, Clyde; in 1961 he took over as captain of HMS St Angelo (Malta). His last appointment was Norway as naval deputy to C-in-C Allied Forces, Northern Europe; retired with a CB in 1965. July 6. Aged 98.

Rear Admiral Derek Bazalgette. Joined Dartmouth aged 13 in 1937. In 1941 he took part in convoys to North Russia in the cruiser Kent as midshipman, then seconded to the destroyer Meteor during convoys PQ18 to Murmansk and QP14. Service in Valiant and landing craft Redoubt; post war Solebay, Saintes and Aisne. Lead the Chatham Division Field Gun competition team in 1950 and qualified as a specialist gunnery officer in 1952. Served Birmingham 1958-59 then commanded minesweepers of 108th Squadron around Cyprus. 2iC of Blake and the carrier Centaur during a mutiny in the Tanganyika Rifles. Director of Naval Operations and trade in the MOD; CO of the frigate Aurora then posted to Hong Kong as chief staff officer. Final seagoing tour as CO of carrier Bulwark, converted to amphibious operations. Last appointment was as Admiral President of the Naval college at Greenwich. July 22. Aged 83.

Sub Lt Graham 'Nobby' Clarke. One of the last two rating pilots. Served 1949-60. Qualified as a pilot 1950 and joined Glory in 1951 flying Firefly 5s 51-52 (Korea); flew from Eagle and operated from all UK Naval Air Stations. In 1955 he ejected upon landing aboard Albion and went under the full length of the ship; this qualified him for the Goldfish Club. Served 1956-59 in Hal Far, Malta. In 1968 he led an expedition in a SRN6 hovercraft from Manaus in Brazil to Trinidad via the River Negro, Casciari Channel and River Orinoco that was the subject of a BBC programme *The Last Great Journey on Earth*. August 4.

Jack Hodges. Leading Cook. Served 1958-66 at Ariel and in HMS Saintes also submarines Truncheon and Cachalot; finishing in HMS Maidstone. July 18 in Victoria, Australia. Aged 65.

Dennis A Defries. CPO. Served FAA as Chief Air Fitter (A/E) 1946-69 in Excalibur, Gamecock, Fulmer, Daedalus, Heron, Nuthatch, Peregrine, Curlew, Seahawk, Victorious, Concor, Goldcrest and Ark Royal; also RN and RN Careers Service, 1969-84. July 15. Aged 77.

George Chapman. Tel. Caledonia Boy 1937. Served in Resource (Malta), Warspite 1939-41, Alresford, Halladale 41-44, Naval Party 2421, Duke of York, Tyne, Loch Rutherford, Chevron, and Adamant. PO Tel. Instructor 1959 at Ganges and recruiting PO South Shields. HMS Caledonia Association. July.

Fred Arthurs. Ex-Caledonia Boy 1938 and a member of the association.

Paul 'Billy' Easton. LPT. Served HMS London, Vernon, Nottingham, Daedalus and others. August 13 in Spain.

Rev Stephen Pickering. Joined chaplaincy service in the RN 1982 and served ten years at Raleigh, Andromeda, Cochrane (Rosyth), 3rd Submarine Squadron (Faslane) and Mercury in 1987. Chaplain of RN Hospitals Stonehouse and Haslar. Served in the first Gulf War on board RFA Agor returning to Haslar after hostilities ceased. August 18. Aged 54.

William Ward. Served in Bruce, Glasgow, Whitesand Bay, Vanguard, Sheffield and AFD 33. HMS Glasgow Association. August 7. Aged 75.

Gordon David Carter. Bugler. Served 1954-64. Joined as Boy Bugler at RM School of Music, Deal. Member of both Portsmouth and Plymouth Bands and served in Eagle, Lynx, Puma and staff of Fleet HQ, South Africa and HMS Afrikander 1961-63. August 22. Aged 68.

Colin John Gould. PO. Joined at 17 in 1948. Served in Diamond and Lynx. August 18. Aged 75.

Raymond Bancroft. Telegraphist. Founder member of HMS Ladybird (Sasebo Japan 1950-52) Association. August 26.

Bert Gapes. Stoker 1st Class. Served 1944-47 in Duke, Hornet, Fulmer and Speedwell. August 22. Aged 81.

Charles F Larvin. L/Sto. Served 1941-46 WW2 in HMS Vienna and Loch Katrine. August 18. Aged 84.

Lt Cdr Graham Frazer. Served 1965-97 in submarines Revenge, Churchill, Swiftsure and Opossum; also surface ships Arrow, Invincible (Falklands) and finally Staff Officer Intelligence to Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England & Northern Ireland. August 3. Aged 60.

Arthur 'Dick' Burggy. AB LTO. Boy Entrant 1924. Last two ships Nigeria and Mauritius (D-Day). September 1. Aged 94.

Dave Thompson. Aircraft Mechanic. Ganges boy. Served 1960-85 in Victorious,

Ark Royal, Bulwark, RFA Tidespring (Falklands), Yeovilton, Culdrose, Abbotsinch. Aged 62.

Eric John Davis 'Scratch'. CPO. Served 1953-72. Joined as a Radio Electrical Artificer apprentice with FAA at Ariel finishing as REA(A)1 at Fulmar. Served in Victorious, Hermes and Ark Royal. August 6. Aged 69.

Fred Hambleton. AB. Served in Fishguard, Rose Bay, Landing Craft (Singapore) Member of HMS Loch Fada Association. August 7. Aged 82.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Temp Lt David Odhams RNVF, RN. Aquitaine branch. Served 1939-46 in trawlers; completed the long gunnery course. August 6. Aged 86.

John Porter. AB LTO. Served 1942-46. Motorcycle dispatch rider during the London Blitz attached to London Fire Brigade aged 15. Joined RN aged 18 and served at Dunkirk, Malta and Salerno; Nelson and Victorious. Founder and life member Wymondham branch and became Chairman 1996. August 6. Aged 83.

Sammy McKnight. Stoker 1st Class. Londonderry branch. Served HMS Londonderry (WW2). August 1. Aged 82.

Frederick Childs. L/Sea. Served WW2 and after in Dahlia, Mullion Cove, White Bear, Liverpool, Jutland and Barrosa. Founder member of Thurrock branch. August 26. Aged 81.

George F Hepworth. Shipwright 1. Redcar and District branch. Served 1939-58 in Havelock, Vimy, Maidstone, Kenya, Mauritius, Starling, Newcastle, Boxer and Cormorant. August 22. Aged 88.
Percy Thomas Price. PO G/Q. Served 1935-48 in Ganges, Hood, Javelin, Rhododendron, Welcome, Pozerica (PQ17 convoy). Founder member of the Fellowship of Naval Men and a member of the North Russia Club, HMS Hood Association and Algerines Association. Standard bearer for the North Russia Club and Lancing branch RNA. August 16. Aged 87.

Harry Axe Hill. CPO Sick Berth branch. Served 1939-46 at Stonehouse, HMS St George (Isle of Man) and Mandapan (Ceylon). Also member of Sick Berth Staff Association. September 3. Aged 86.

Bill Hillier. AB. South Bristol, secretary and founder member. Served 1958-67. Trained at Raleigh and served in Penelope. June 8.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Lt Cdr B H T Cookson RNR.
Lt Cdr W C Green. Served: Maidstone, Victory, Royal Arthur, Narvik, Drake, Hermes, Barfoil and Centurion.
Capt W Hawley. Served: Ocean, Heron, Seahawk, Victory, Centaur, Eagle and NATO.
Lt S H Spencer. Served: Victorious, Osprey, Daedalus, Bulwark, St Vincent, Barnard and Dryad.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Andrew Roxborough. ERA. Served Blackpool (Bangor). July 24. Aged 87.
Lt Ron Wilby RNVF. Served in Pincher. August 15. Aged 91.

Sub Lt Dennis Hawkes. Served in Truelove. August 18. Aged 84.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
J A L 'Alastair' McEwan. AB. Hull branch. Served 1943-46 in Thrasher and Trenchant. Aged 83.
J O 'John' Park. ERA1. Bristol branch. Served 1955-59 in Artemis, Selene, Auriga, Seascope and Seraph. Aged 75.
E J 'Eric' Taylor. AB HSD. Scotland NE branch. Served 1948-49 in Sirdar, Seneschal and Trump. Aged 82.
R J 'Ron' Woodfield. L/Cook. Northants branch. Served 1945-46 in Telemachus, Sceptre and Solent. Aged 79.

HMS UNICORN ASSOCIATION
William John 'Bill' Brown. Leading Air Mechanic Ordnance in Unicorn from 1943-46. Treasurer of the association for many years. May 5. Aged 82.

Derek 'Lofty' Norris RM. Served in Unicorn 1951-54. June 5. Aged 79.
Eric 'Buck' Taylor. AB (QR3). Served 1944-56 and in Unicorn 1949-51. August. Aged 80.

W Robert 'Bob' Dearing. PO Air Mechanic (L). Ganges Boy and served in Greyhound, Victory, hallam Ark Royal, Waxwing, Nuthatch, Fulmar; also at Bankstown (Australia) and 854 Squadron (Nowra). Served Unicorn 1942-45. August 5. Aged 87.

HMS NEWFOUNDLAND ASSOCIATION
Graham Breerton. Stoker. Served 1943-46 in ship 1944-46 also served in Resolution. August 17. Aged 82.

Cpl Anthony Scott RM. In ship 1956-58. August 16. Aged 72.

Cpl Hugh Wright RM. In ship 1952-55 also served 40 Commando RM. August 13. Aged 76.

John Hughes RM. Served 1945-68 in Newfoundland, Glasgow, Protector and 40, 41, 45 Commando RM. August 22.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
R Perkins. Served in LCI(L) 130, LCS(R)1 and LCT 2447. July 27.

W F Tomkinson. Served in LCT 700. June 1.

H Thompson. Served in LST 3002 and HMS Obedient. July 31.

L A Hewson. Served in LCTs 344, 379 and 1150. August 18.

J F Larcombe. Served in LCT 1099. August 23.

Sports lottery

August 18: £5,000 – Lt M Scott, 771 NAS Culdrose; £1,500 – MEM1 A W Tite, HMS Iron Duke; £500 – AET1 S A Mitchell, 824 NAS Culdrose.

August 25: £5,000 – Lt G A Dalglish, HMS York; £1,500 – POA(Phot) S L Rose, HMS Heron; £500 – Lt M J Moore, HMS Tyne.

September 1: £5,000 – WO1(MEA) M C Claydon, HMS Sultan; £1,500 – Lt Cdr J D Boddington, 820 NAS Culdrose; £500 – MEA App D M T Vincent, HMS Sultan.

September 8: £5,000 – Lt P S Rogers, BRNC; £1,500 – POMEM(M) L M Bubb, HMS Liverpool; £500 – MEM1 P S Pullen, HMS Illustrious.

Where are you now?

HMS Ashanti: Kim served onboard 1974-77 and during that time there was a major fire onboard and sadly lives were lost. Kim would like to get in touch with anyone else who was onboard during this time. Contact Kim 'Ringo' Starr at kimstarr1@hotmail.com or write to 20 Greenpark Close, Mullinger Co. Westmeath, Ireland.

HMS Ashanti: Mike Clarke is trying to locate Philip Hughes. He served in HMS Ashanti from 1964-67 as a stoker. If you have a contact for him could you contact Mike Clarke at oneidamj@hotmail.com or write to 22-60 Edmonton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 1P7, Canada.

HMS Brighton: Seeking everyone who served in HMS Brighton to join the fledgling association. Seeking stories and pictures for the association website. For more information contact 'Jeff' Warr at hmsbrightonf106@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 0113 226 9160. Website is: <http://www.hmsbrightonf106.co.uk>.

HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association: Did you ever serve in Bulwark, Albion or Centaur? The association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. Magazine three times per year plus events including AGM/Social, sea-days and anniversary commemorations. Membership is just £8 per annum. Enquiries to Leigh Easton at ngsfo@tiscali.co.uk, website <http://www.bulwarkassoc.plus.com> or write to Glenmoray, Hayford Place, Cambusbarron, Stirling, FK7 9JX.

HMS Caledonia: Seeking Dave Allabaster who was an Ordnance Artificer with Peter John Dornay in October/November 1957 at Caledonia. Dave was John's best man when he got married in Fareham on November 2. With his Golden Wedding coming up he would like to be able to invite Dave. Contact Mrs Shirley J Lawrence, 7 Testbourne Road, Totton, SO40 8FE.

HMS Caution: Any one know the whereabouts of ex-Leading Stoker Pearman, who served on HMS Caution 1958-59 and was best man at Phil's wedding in 1960 in Portsmouth? Phil now lives in Western Australia. Contact Philip Hipkins at philhipkins@bigpond.com or write to: 24 Northmore Road, Eden Hill, WA, 6054, Australia.

HMS Gambia: Seeking any former crew of HMS Gambia, who served between 1942 and 1960, who may not know of the HMS Gambia Association. All ranks and rates are applicable. Contact Bill Hartland at Bilhartland@hmsgambia.com, visit the website at <http://www.hmsgambia.com>, tel: 01934 860186.

HMS Ganges 1957-59, Collingwood 43 1955 352/361: Seeking James Adams, George Grant, Barry 'Jack' Harman (Ipswich), Jervis Markham, Winterburn, Jeff Butler, Dave Frater, Dave Charles and many more. Please contact J W Curtis at johnwillcurtis@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01780 754291.

HMS Ganges 1966-67: Fred would like to hear from anyone who was with him at Shotley Gate 1966-68. He would especially like to hear from Dave Tucker and his wife Valerie, who at some stage may have been living in Cambridge. Contact Fred 'Lofty' Munson, 59 Windy Nook Road, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead, NE9 6OP.

HMS Girdle Ness 1960-62: Looking up old shipmates from M(E)s, LME(s) – particularly seeking M(E) Keith 'Pusser' Hill for possible reunion in future. Contact Derek Law at derek@jean@talktalk.net, tel: 01706 631205 or write to 30 Southdown Close, Rochdale, Lancs, OL11 4PP.

HMS Lincoln: Looking for anyone who served aboard HMS Lincoln 1968-69, Far East Fleet, to join our reunion in July 2008. Have contacted the commanding officer, the navigator and the Beira Bish. Please contact LCK Cass Goulbourne at dcgoulbourne@aol.com or tel: 01942 894544.

HMS Londonderry: Seeking messmates from the electrical mess 1965-67: EM Scouse Jones, LEM Bob Gordon, LEM Neville, REM Jemson and any others. Contact Eric 'George' Whittaker at kateric@gotadsl.co.uk or write to 12 Summerdale, Shotley Bridge, Consett, Co. Durham, DH8 0ET.

Eric Cyril Lowder: Seeking old friend Eric who joined the RN as a Boy Entrant in the

Ask Jack

HMS Arethusa: Seeking anyone who was on the Royal Naval training ship Arethusa in the 60s, early 70s, who remembers Malcolm Rogers, Hazel's brother. He has passed away and Hazel is looking to put a story together about his life. Is there an 'old boys' club for this ship, any help would be great. Contact Hazel Smith (née Rogers), 11 St Pierre Avenue, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 9FH or tel: 01476 560136.

HMS Cavendish (R15/D15): Alan has seen a photograph of Cavendish coming alongside HMS Arbitr which shows forward armament of two 4in turrets, not two single 4.7in as built. Does anyone know when or why this conversion took place? Contact Alan T Ashworth at alan@ashwora.demon.co.uk, tel: 01943 465899 or write to 14 Bridge Avenue, Otley, LS21 2AA.

RNAS Culdrose: The daughter of Roger Stuart Burgess, who was in the Royal Navy from 1950s to 1975-6 and was based in HMS Culdrose, is seeking pictures and information about him. He died in 1976 in a car accident in Cornwall. She and her sisters are wondering if anyone remembers him and perhaps has any photos of him. They only have a few. If you know anyone who can help, contact Hayley Burgess at poochbearburgess@hotmail.com or tel: 07866 606874.

HMS Newcastle 1955-62: Looking to hear from any old sailors who served on HMS Newcastle between 1955-62 who remember Joseph 'Joe' O'Hagan? Unfortunately Joseph passed away in 1985 leaving a young family and wife who would like to hear of any stories. My mother-in-law recalls him speaking of a friend with the nickname 'Yorkie'. Contact David Brown at brown@alexanders-sawmills.co.uk or tel: 07979 860353.

HMS Penelope: During her years of service the frigate HMS Penelope (F127) visited the Port of London just once, at the beginning of December 1977. Can anyone offer information or copies of pictures of this event? Any costs incurred such as postage and copies of pictures will, of course, be met. Contact Peter Rickard at peter.v.rickard@btopenworld.com or tel: 07756 786665.

S32: Looking for former crew members or information on S32 a former British powerboat, built MAB, later used for ASR duties and possibly Special Duties, what would these be? Remarkably this vessel still survives and is under restoration by a private individual who would like to

1950s and went on to complete 22 years. Possibly achieved the rank of PO. The last address Terry has for him was at Millbrook, Cornwall, though he was later in Malta living on his own boat 'Darag'. Contact Terry Allen at quellan21@yahoo.co.uk or write to PO Box 59, Rosetta, KwaZulu-Natal, 3301, South Africa.

East Minelayers Association: If anyone who served on the six fast minelayers, Abdiel, Latona, Welshman, Ariadne, Manxman and Apollo, is interested in joining the association, please contact Jim Calcraft on 01562 67822.

HMS Phoebe: Trying to trace ex REM 'Wiggy' Bennett who served aboard HMS Phoebe 1971-72 with a view to having a reunion: Brum Penton, Colin Drewitt, Neil Avery and Bomber Wells. If you can help, contact Bomber Wells at bom-wells@cardinocottage.fsnet.co.uk, tel: 01646 602457 or 0787 013 4693 or write to Hazel Hill Farm, Llanstadwell, Milford Haven.

Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association: Shipmates reunited after 51 years at the Inaugural General Meeting and reunion of the Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association in Bournemouth in September. Pictures on www.renba.org.uk. Where are your ex Electrical messmates? They might be members already and looking for you. For information on this growing association, write to Mike Crowe, Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association, 7 Heath Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG or e-mail mike@renba.org.uk.

HMS Salisbury: In 1958 'Taffy' Bowden, an EMM Stoker, joined HMS Salisbury and became pals with a leading EMM Stoker, whose first name was Malcolm (surname unknown). They both went to the Far East in 1959 and returned in September 1960. They were both drafted to Portsmouth, Malcolm went to POs Victoria and Malcolm to Gosport. In 1968, Taffy was involved in a car accident and left the Navy. He would like to hear from Malcolm, who lived in Manchester. Contact Taffy through his daughter Miss M Vernon, 10 Wykeham Drive, Lower Ham, Plymouth, PL2 2SF or tel: 07877 164761.

HMS Sheffield, Protector and O-Boats: Tony Hammond would like to hear from anyone who was on his ships or submarines during 1957-66. He was on Sheffield, Protector and O-Boats. Contact Tony at shirleyandtony@tiscali.co.uk, tel: 0121 360 7755 or write to 4 Sutherland Close, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7LT.

HMS Tyler: Are there any more former shipmates of this Captain-class frigate still enjoying life? A few are still in contact with each other and they would welcome others. Contact Harry 'Jock' Bryce, 23 Dalriada Road, Greenock, PA16 0RB or tel: 01475 719793.

HMS Venerable: Jim Maingay (Dutch), evacuee on board HMS Venerable from Batavia (Java) to Colombo, December 1945, seeks information about Harry Jones, seaman HMS Venerable. Contact Jim Maingay at jimmaingay@skynet.be or write to Alfons Servaisel 37, Schoten, 2900, Belgium.

HMS Glasgow: Tracing quarterdeck staff of the 1948-50 commission, namely: Cornwaite (Liverpool), Garthwaite (Geordie), Wright (Manchester) and Jack Graig. If there are any other ex '48-50 crew do please get in touch. Ex-crew of D88 are also requested to get in touch as you will be made very welcome. Contact Allan Mercer, 89 Royal Avenue, Widnes, WA8 8HJ or tel: 0151 50 2445.

Devonport Field Gun Association is still open to all past command Field Gunners and supporters who wish to become members. Further information can be obtained from Paula Garnham at paula953@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01803 322320. There is an answerphone so if not available please leave a message and we will return your call. Existing members should remember that membership is renewable on January 1.

HMS Whitesand Bay: Looking to find EM1 Jeff Steed who served aboard between 1952-54, or anyone who knows of his whereabouts. Contact Geoff Nightingale, 268 Galley Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3LD or tel: 01442 263405.

compile her wartime history. Contact Ron Young at c.young80@ntlworld.com or write to 29 Mitchell Avenue, Thornaby on Tees, TS17 9DH.

HMS Saintes, Autumn/Winter 1953: Seeking information about my uncle, Terence John Johnson, Stoker/Mechanic. He died in November/December 1953. One of his messmates was at his funeral at Fayid, Egypt, with an officer. Don't know who they were, no names are mentioned in the letter. Can any one help me out there? Contact Susan Cartwright, 2 Hillcrest Avenue, Homes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7DU or tel: 01477 533298.

HMS Sefton 1944-46: Walter 'Wally' Charles Colin Wheeler was steward on board during this period. Do you have any information about the Sefton having served during this period or know of relatives who did? Contact Colin Wheeler, tel: 01732 762363, or at colin@colinwheeler1.wanadoo.co.uk.

Service Transfers: At the end of 1944, start of 1945 Mr Underwood recalls that 'By command of their Lordships' fully trained men from the RN, RM and RAF were transferred to the Army with a view to defeating Germany in the shortest possible time. If anyone else remembers this happening could they contact Mr Underwood, 41 Valenties Way, Rush Green, Romford, Essex, RM7 0YD.

Wilkinson Sword: Cdr Hatch served as the XO in HMS Raleigh from September 2003 until May 2005, hosting the many senior naval officers who took the salute at the Passing Out Parade. At some point his sword was swapped with one of theirs. He won a Gieves sword (no distinguishing markings) and lost his Wilkinson sword (with G W H HATCH engraved on the blade). He would be extremely grateful if he could return the Gieves sword to its rightful owner and get his own back. If anyone on checking their sword, find that it has mysteriously become a Wilkinson variant, he would be delighted to hear from them so that a swap can be executed. Contact Cdr Giles Hatch RN, ACT SEE DPM, SHAPE, BFPO 26 or tel: 00 32 65 448510.

Telegraphist Badge: Peter is looking for two, if possible, PO Telegraphist badges – white background with the blue wings and flash with crown above (as worn on white uniforms or No 8s). He will pay any reasonable costs. Contact Peter at peter@talknor.freeserve.co.uk or tel: 01603 618806 or 07752 190495.

Reunions

OCTOBER 2007

HMS Gurkha: Reunion at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, October 5-7. More details from Dave Kilpatrick on e-mail kilpatrick01@btinternet.com or tel: 07974 156996.

HMS Troubridge: Reunion on October 13 at the Royal Hotel in Crewe. Contact Bryan Pace at 665 West Marr Road, Howell, MI 48855, USA or e-mail romt1@yahoo.com.

HMS Tireless: The second Tireless (Build) reunion is to be held at the Royal Hotel, Crewe, October 19-21. Contact Roly 'Jan' Lock at roly@lockt114.fsnet.co.uk, tel: 01179 133168 or write to 59 Whitley Mead, Harry Stoke, S Gloucs, BS34 8XT.

NOVEMBER 2007

Devon County Festival of Remembrance takes place on November 8 at 1930 in the Great Hall, Exeter University. Tickets for RBL members at £6, non-members £8. Further details from HQ, Devon County Royal British Legion, 3 Barnfield Crescent, Exeter, EX1 1QT, tel: 01392 273111 or 01392 272221.

HMS Eagle – last commission 1969-72: Pickle Night reunion on HMS Warrior in Portsmouth on November 9. All ex-Eaglets, spouses and partners welcome. Dinner, dance and entertainment on the night, plus 'up spirits', reception and get together. Buffet on Saturday November 10, 1300 onwards, at the Duke of Buckingham, Old Portsmouth. Contact organiser Danny du Feu (former LSeaboats), email danny@ddf-photography.co.uk, mobile 07891 660715 or 57 Westover Road, Leicester LE3 3DU.

DECEMBER 2007

HMS Protector Association: Annual Christmas reunion on December 8 at the Spice Ship Inn, Weymouth. 2008 Annual Grand Reunion and AGM will be held at the Metropole Hotel, Blackpool. For further information or booking details please contact Doug Harris at dougatgspindrift@aol.com, online at <http://www.hmsprotector.org> or tel: 01495 718870.

MARCH 2008

HMS Loch Fada Association: 11th annual reunion, March 7-10, at the Mill Rythe Holiday Resort, Hayling Island. Contact Bob Harris at bobharris3390@supanet.com,



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Don't forget the tartan

MEMBERS are reminded that the Association has its own registered tartan, unique to the RNA.

The custodian of the tartan and the various pieces of apparel made from it is S/M Fred Cooper, life vice president and DNCM for the Scottish area.

Fred is able to supply the following:

■ Neck ties: £12.50 each (including postage and packing)

■ Bow ties: £7 (inc p&p – please state neck size)

■ Cummerbunds: £35 each – stocks very low as *Navy News* went to press

■ Waistcoat: £55 each, though only one – large size – in stock at the moment

■ Tartan material: £38 per metre – p&p and insured delivery depends on amount ordered.

To order any of these items please contact S/M Fred at Muirhead Cottage, Montquhir, Carmyllie, Arbroath, Angus DD11 2QS.

Cheques should be made payable to GB Cooper.

So it's arrivederci, Beccles

A PARTY from Beccles branch and the RMA (Lowestoft) will be visiting Italy this month thanks to lottery cash.

The visit starts in the Naples area at the beach-head sites of Salerno and the battlefield of Vietri, where 41 Cdo RM took part – wreaths and poppy crosses will be placed on RM and

RN graves in the nearby cemetery.

A trip to Vesuvius will be followed by a journey to the hilltop fortress of Monte Casino, the assault on which included Royal Marines.

Then the 42-strong group moves on to Rome and the beach-head of Anzio, and it is hoped the travellers will be able to talk to local

residents about the battles.

After two nights in Rome, including a look at some of the treasures of the Eternal City, the party will return home.

The trip was made possible by £10,000 grants to each association by the National Lottery's Awards for All scheme.

Shipmates urged to help keep club afloat

A STRUGGLING club in the London area is appealing to shipmates nearby to prevent it from sinking.

The chairman of Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon club,

S/M Colin Dockerill, said: "Yet another small branch/club in the No 1 Area seems about to sink – not, as you might think, from the weight of red tape rules, regs and other constrictions that have

been imposed on branches that run clubs, but sadly through the demise of our membership.

"Although we still have about 68 members, due to their ages and the ailments that seem to

accompany the over-70s, many of them cannot attend club activities on a regular basis.

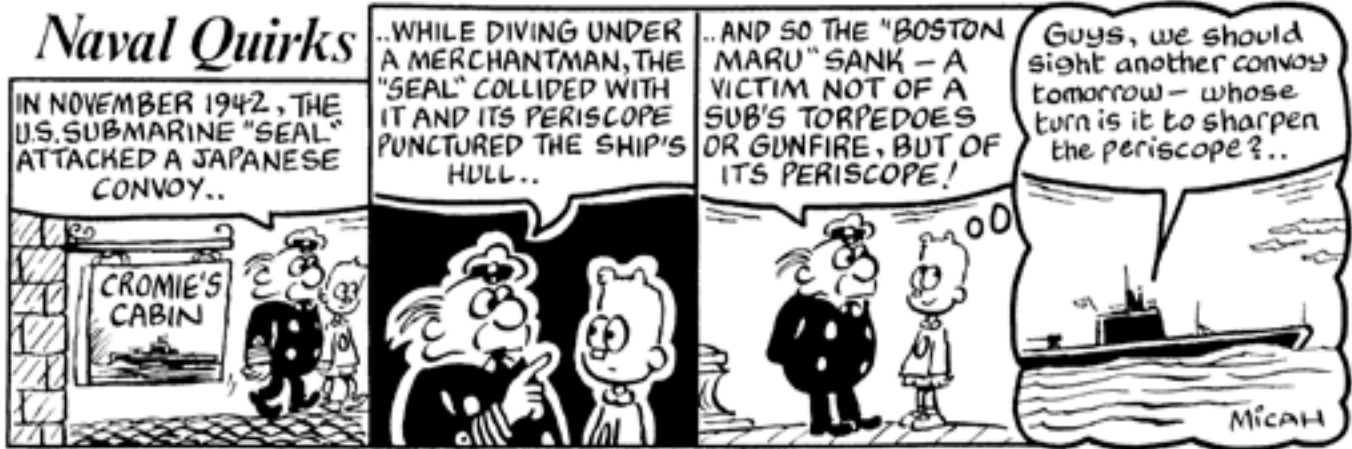
Inevitably the club finances in hand are gradually being whittled away, to cover the club's running costs each week.

"The closing of the club will undoubtedly affect the administration of this branch.

"We are well-known in the No 1 Area for our hospitality of a free buffet and 'tor' for committees and our unique entertainment, SODS Opera every Saturday.

"Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon are appealing to all branches and clubs to rally support for a visit to us in the near future – it will help keep us afloat, and it may be your last chance to spend an evening at the 'best RNA in London'.

"Contact details are in the RN Diary."



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Memorable night with Pensioners

CHESHUNT branch members enjoyed a memorable night out with the Chelsea Pensioners.

The branch's serving shipmate, John Hanks, was allowed special leave by the Commanding Officer of HMS Turbulent to attend the event at the Chelsea Hospital.

S/M John and his colleague had been the escort to the two Pensioners who were guests at the Cheshunt annual dinner, and he presented his ship's plaque to the Secretary at the hospital.

S/M James Murphy, Public Liaison Officer for the branch, said the event indicates the respect the younger members of the Armed Forces show to the veterans, and equally shows the acknowledgement by the elders of the dangers that serving members of the Forces face today.

Brighton peers

AN HMS Brighton Association has been formed – any shipmate interested in joining should contact Jeff Warr at 79 Wykebeck Avenue, Leeds LS 9 0JG or email brightonf106@yahoo.co.uk



● Veterans of the Kenya Navy Instructors Mess, Mtongwe Naval Base, Mombasa, gathered at the Church House Inn, Rattery, in Devon for their annual reunion. The team (pictured above with partners) set up and trained the new independent republic's navy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Former CO Cdr Tim Hall attended this year

Crosby arranges veterans' big day

CROSBY have hosted a tri-Service Veterans Day in their branch at the Greater Crosby Old Comrades Club.

The event was attended by the Mayor of Sefton, Sefton MP Joe Benton and Cdr Ryan, a serving Naval Officer.

Around 120 ex-Servicemen and women attended the function.

A highlight was the presentation of Veteran's Badges by the dignitaries to 20 people.

The range of people attending was wide – there were representatives from the King's Independent Regiment, a group of lively ATS girls who served during World War 2, Sea Cadets from Sefton unit TS Starling, Air Force Cadets from Formby, Merchant Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Navy and a representation from the Military Vehicle Appreciation Society, which provided three vehicles open for public view.

Also on view were reproductions of World War 2 recruitment posters, action pictures from the Falklands War – many never seen in public before – and the memoirs of a Merchant Navy sailor on the Russian convoys.

Crosby chairman S/M Bill Roberts said: "This has been one of the best events ever run by this RNA branch.

"A lot of people worked very hard in setting up for the day, and we couldn't have asked for it to go any better."



● RFA Mounts Bay at Leith during the Edinburgh Tattoo

RMA on board RFA

THE Edinburgh branch of the Royal Marines Association held their 20th anniversary bash on board RFA Mounts Bay at Leith.

The new amphibious support ship was in Scotland to back the Edinburgh Tattoo, and to host a number of military events.

And chief among them was the RMA party, which attracted Royals young and old from across the country.

Guest of honour was Lt Gen Robert Fulton RM, Governor of Gibraltar, and organiser Matt

Jones also managed to arrange for Sir Jimmy Savile to attend and stay on board for a couple of days – prompting the presentation of a *Matt'll Fix It* badge for the veteran broadcaster and fund-raiser.

Scottish RMR personnel put on a display of unarmed combat, then the RM Band Scotland staged Beat Retreat.

Sir Robert also took the opportunity to present seven Royals with campaign medals for service in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The six-course dinner was prepared in the ship's main galley and served to more than 160 guests on the vehicle deck, being delivered down four decks via the ammunition and supply lifts.

An auction raised more than £2,000 – thanks in no small part to Sir Jimmy, who bought back his own contribution, a special bottle of single malt whisky, for £1,000.

Members of the RMA Central Office received a cheque for £1,000 from the Edinburgh branch on board the auxiliary, and the British Forces Foundation, which raises money to send top-notch entertainers to war zones to help bolster the morale of British Forces, received a cheque for £3,000 from RMA Edinburgh.

Matt Jones said thanks were due to Shirley Sime, Chris and Jackie Moyers and branch president Brig Ian Gardiner.

York pays tribute to lost Wrens

MEMBERS of York branch are to pay tribute to the Wrens who died when their wartime troopship was torpedoed.

S/M Bernard Hallas said: "In August 1941 a special highly-trained unit of the Women's Royal Naval Service were assembled in Scarborough awaiting embarkation.

"All of them were experts in radio, wireless telegraphy, coding and decoding, and they were looking forward to establishing an important naval communications base in Gibraltar.

"Accompanied by two Royal Marines, they were happily excited as they were welcomed on board HM Transport Ship SS Aguila.

"It was their first and most important adventure and they were looking forward to showing their skills and playing a most important part in the war.

"If only they had known that their movements were not as secret as the admiralty had planned."

The SS Aguila was torpedoed amidstships by a U-boat off Ireland, and sank within 90 seconds.

Less than 20 of the 161 souls on board were rescued – but all 22 of the Wrens died.

"In commemoration of that tragic disaster, members of the now-renamed Association of Wrens from the York branch, accompanied by RN veterans, set sail from Scarborough harbour to pay their solemn tribute to those brave heroines of a bygone age, and to dip their standards in a salute as a suitably-inscribed wreath floated gently over the watery grave of a band of very gallant ladies in uniform," said S/M Bernard.

"They will never be forgotten."

London deeps host Baroness Thatcher

BARONESS Thatcher was among the VIP guests at the Submariners Association London Branch 75th anniversary lunch.

Although the Royal Navy commissioned its first submarine in 1901, and submariners began to gather with their own kind, it was not until 1932 that the Government gave formal recognition to the Submariners Old Comrades Association (London).

From there branches formed around the UK and worldwide as the Submariners Association.

To mark the occasion, the branch held an "informal and relaxed – but dignified" lunch.

The former Prime Minister was a personal guest of Lady Midge Fieldhouse; other VIPs included the latest new member, Vice Admiral Sir Neville Purvis, retired branch and national president Rear Admiral Tony Whetstone and, representing serving submariners, WO1 Jim Slater of the RN Submarine School.

Thanks to the good connections of branch social secretary Terry Thornback and his wife Jenny, the branch was able to hold its lunch at the Chelsea Hospital.

During the event Baroness Thatcher was happy to receive her set of submariner's dolphins in the traditional fashion.

She was also awarded honorary membership of the branch, as was Lady Fieldhouse, Desna Tyson (wife of the chairman), Betty

Whetstone, wife of the Admiral, and Anne Sanz, a long-time supporter and wife of Gaston Sanz, a branch member and the most highly-decorated Free French submariner in World War 2.

S/M Stan Hancox, a wartime deep, proposed the toast to "absent friends and those still on patrol."

Two cakes were cut – one marking the 75th anniversary, the other marking the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War, which was cut by Baroness Thatcher herself.

In a letter of appreciation, Lady Fieldhouse remarked that Baroness Thatcher now considers herself very much a member of the branch, and that shipmates should not be surprised if she turns up at a monthly gathering.

● *Baroness Thatcher receives her honorary membership certificate from Submariners Association London branch chairman Ian Tyson*



Goodbye and hello in Tokyo

SHIPMATES from the Japan branch gathered for a farewell dinner to honour their departing president, Capt Simon Chelton RN, whose posting as Defence Attaché to Tokyo drew to a close.

The evening also gave the group a chance to say *Youkoso!* (Welcome!) to incoming attaché Capt Gareth Derrick RN.

The dinner was held in the Gonpachi restaurant, said branch chairman S/M Peter Button.

"The place is modelled in traditional Japanese rustic style and specialises in dishes such as soba and yakitori," said Peter.

"The restaurant was the basis for a scene in the Hollywood film *Kill Bill 1* and Japanese prime minister Koizumi has used the venue in the past to host US Presidents Clinton and Bush – on separate state visits, I hasten to add."

The branch, however, had no qualms about hosting its outgoing and incoming presidents at the same event, and an excellent evening was enjoyed by all, with the sake and the conversation both flowing freely by the end.

Impressive turnout at Ouistreham service

MEMBERS of the France Nord branch were out in force at the annual RN/RM memorial service of remembrance at Ouistreham in Normandy.

The memorial stands in front of the *gare maritime*, and attracted an impressive turnout for the ceremony.

As well as RN and RM veterans and their families, there were French veterans of No 4 Commando, some two dozen members of the Royal Marines, the Mayor of Ouistreham and his deputy, a "huge group" of RN officers and ratings from HMS Sultan, and members of the RBL who were undertaking a Normandy Pilgrimage.

More than a dozen standards added colour to the service, which

was led by an RN chaplain.

The Naval Attaché from Paris read the Lesson, the Act of Remembrance was recited by an RM RSM, and the *Last Post* and *Reveille* was sounded by an RM bugler.

Falklands theme for Cheshunt

TWO events involving Cheshunt branch featured a Falklands 25 theme.

First was an open day in Broxbourne in support of the RNA and Sea cadet unit TS Intrepid, named after the Falklands assault ship.

Also on display was a model of Cheshunt's wartime adopted ship HMS Dahlia, the model having been carved from a

piece of dockyard timber.

It was presented to Cheshunt by S/M John Trevillon and is in the Lowewood Museum.

A Mess Deck supper in Waltham Cross saw shipmates from Enfield and Edmonton join the occasion, at which Falklands memorabilia was displayed – including a captured flag which had flown over Government House.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our August edition (right) was RFA Green Rover, which is now known as KRI Arun.

The £50 prize for the correct answer goes to Stephen King, of Baldock in Herts.

This month's ship (above) entered service towards the end of World War 2 but still managed to make her mark.

What was her name, and what was the number of the U-boat she destroyed in March 1945 with HMS Wild Goose? The right answers could win you £50.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will



go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is November 9. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our December edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

Medal roll for RNXS members

THE RN Mine Watching Service was established in 1952 and renamed the RN Auxiliary Service (RNXS) ten years later.

It was disbanded in 1994, but there are moves afoot to ensure the organisation does not fade away.

All personnel who served in the organisation for 12 years or more were awarded the RN Auxiliary Service Medal, and a number of ex-RNXS members are creating a Medal Roll to commemorate all volunteers who were awarded the medal – the official record of the recipients has been destroyed.

M P Cocker would like to hear from all those who were awarded the medal, and he would like to gather the following information:

- Full name, unit and rank/rate
- Date of award of medal and (if applicable) the Bar
- Date of Enrolment
- Details of other medals held. eg WW2, Korea, Suez and so on.

Mr Cocker can be contacted at 10 Ellerbeck Road, Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 1DH.

Stand needed

BOURNE branch are looking for a stand for a ship's lifebelt – the type that can be seen on a jetty at the end of a brow.

They have the lifebelt – they just need the stand.

If anyone can help, they are willing to pay for postage.

Telephone S/M Brenda White on 01780 753787.



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MYSTERY PICTURE 152

Name

Address

My answers



Improved 'pool on Mersey

DESTROYER HMS Liverpool paid her first visit since a £7m revamp to the city after which she is named.

The Portsmouth warship has been working her way back to front-line 'fitness' since leaving Rosyth in May.

Shipwrights on the Forth made sure her 4.5in gun could fire further and improved the ship's communications system among other enhancements (the new cardiovascular suite, or gym, has proved a big hit).

The ship berthed at Huskisson Dock for a three-day break on the Mersey to allow her to catch up with a plethora of affiliates, including Sea Cadets from Liverpool and Crewe, plus the mayor of Sefton.

This was the last chance for the destroyer's CO to take his ship home; Cdr Henry Duffy hails from the land of the Liver Bird.

"It's always a pleasure to bring Liverpool back to the Mersey - we receive such a warm welcome," he added.

"I couldn't have wished for a more suitable end to my time on board than a visit to both my and my ship's home city."

After leaving Liverpool, the ship headed to Pompey before returning to sea for visits to Cardiff and Cherbourg.

Bell tolls in friendship

THE bell of a warship seized 200 years ago has been returned to home soil as Britons and Danes commemorated one of the darkest moments in their countries' histories.

The second battle of Copenhagen in 1807 saw hundreds of Danish civilians killed and much of the capital destroyed by the guns of the British fleet.

The battle is less well known in Britain than the 1801 clash when Nelson famously turned a blind eye to instructions. But in Denmark, the 1807 battle is considerably more infamous.

For the Royal Navy, the Baltic was a vital source of wood - and its sea lanes had to be kept free.

Whitehall feared the Danish Fleet could be handed over to the French and so, as at Oran 130 years later, the Royal Navy launched a pre-emptive strike.

The result was a bitter battle, especially so as the guns of the British Fleet were aimed at the city. More than 2,000 Danes were killed and one in three homes in Copenhagen was razed.

The Danish king ordered his fleet burned rather than fall into the Royal Navy's hands, but the order was never carried out - and the ship named for the ruler, Christian VII, was among the vessels captured.

It was subsequently pressed into service by the RN before being converted to a hospital ship, a duty it performed for the final quarter

century of her life.

Which is how the ship's bell came to be in the Royal Hospital Haslar, where it hung for the next 150 years.

Come 2007, however, and with the Danes our comrades in arms, especially in Afghanistan, the RN decided to mark the 200th anniversary of the battle by returning the bell.

Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Vice Admiral Paul Boissier formally returned the bell to Rear Admiral Nils Wang, head of the Royal Danish Navy, during a ceremony at the RDN's museum in Copenhagen.

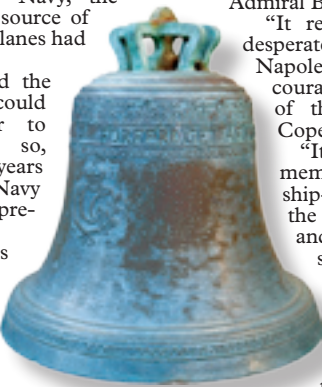
"The bell connects us all directly with the events of 1807," said Vice Admiral Boissier.

"It reminds us of the desperate pressures of the Napoleonic Wars and the courage and resilience of this great city of Copenhagen."

"It is a lasting memorial to a proud ship-of-the-line and the men, both British and Danish, who sailed and fought in her."

The return of the bell is just one ceremony commemorating the 200th anniversary of the battle.

Assault ship HMS Albion was also in the Danish capital as were the Band of HM Royal Marines.



● *The word of the Lord remains forever... Sailors and Royal Marines march towards Copenhagen's Frederikskirken during ceremonies to mark the anniversary of the 1807 battle*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, HMS Albion



Please release me...

YES, there are dummies at RNAS Yeovilton - and they serve a very useful purpose.

The Somerset air station played host to paramedics from Devon and Somerset Air Ambulance and South West Country Ambulance Service as military and civilian lifesavers shared their expertise on grappling serious accidents with Fleet Air Arm fire and rescue personnel.

The morning was devoted to theoretical sessions covering rescue procedures from aircraft based at Yeovilton (including those equipped with ejector seats), dealing with aircraft fires and also road accidents (or Road Traffic Collisions as they're known now in official parlance). The morning concluded with practical use of fire extinguishers for the ambulance personnel.

After lunch, the training switched to practical experience on the airfield's training ground.

Devon and Somerset's air ambulance dropped in, and shared some of their experiences of road accidents.

Unfortunately the ambulance was not on the ground long before it was called upon to deal with a real-life emergency.

In the fliers' absence, the remaining

paramedics worked alongside a naval medic in the aftermath of a (mock) car smash, with Yeovilton's fire crew using their hand and power tools to show how to safely cut 'casualties' free from the wreckage of a vehicle, while instructors stepped in at every stage of the rescue to offer their insights.

Having run through a rescue in slow-motion, it was time to put the training more thoroughly to the test - in real time.

This time, the Yeovilton crews posed a real test for their civilian counterparts: an aircraft had crash landed into two vehicles, leaving numerous casualties trapped who had to be rescued ('Fred' is pictured, left, being cut free from his smashed cockpit).

Yeovilton's rescue teams don't merely deal with accidents on the air station; they have responded to accidents on roads near the base in the past.

"The exercise was most beneficial for all of the personnel involved and gave the Service departments valuable experience in working with their civilian counterparts," said RNAS Yeovilton's Commanding Officer Cdre Chris Palmer.

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Yeovilton

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Albion invades Sunderland

HMS ALBION was invited to Sunderland for a spectacular air show – and returned the favour by invading the city's beach, writes Jessica Wretling, on work experience.

Initially, the ship spent two days alongside at Corporation Quay, which included a Ship Open to Visitors (or SOTV), which saw several thousand members of the public explore the ship and talk to members of the ship's company.

The assault ship then sailed from the quay, anchoring offshore to form the backdrop for the Sunderland Air Show, the largest free show of its type in Europe, according to organisers.

From there sailors enjoyed a grandstand view of the RAF's Red Arrows' gravity-defying aerobatics as thousands of spectators watched from the shore.

Royal Marines staged a mock invasion of the crowded shore – one of the largest city beaches in the UK.

Also entertaining the crowds were the Black Cats team with their Lynx helicopters.

Formed in 2001, the Black Cats

are the RN's elite display team.

The two aircraft, from 702 Naval Air Squadron, offer a unique aerial ballet that has thrilled crowds on the air show circuit.

In the arena were displays by the Royal Marines Commandos, Royal Navy Field Gun teams, all to the soundtrack of the Royal Marines Band Scotland.

Cdr Clayton Fisher, the Logistics Officer of HMS Albion, said: "It was an honour for the ship's presence to be acknowledged by the famous Red Arrows, and we added further excitement for the thousands lining the shore by staging the beach invasion."



● Green berets storm ashore at Sunderland (main picture) while HMS Albion enjoys a special view of the Red Arrows (above)



Cheers to the Mary Rose!

A SPECIALLY-brewed beer has been launched to help raise funds for the Mary Rose.

The Oakleaf Brewery in Gosport has used traditional Tudor techniques to produce 'Raise a Glass', officially launched in Portsmouth by Shep Woolley.

The launch was one of a number of events marking the 25th anniversary of the raising of the Tudor warship from the sea bed off Southsea Castle, and was the brainchild of Mary Rose shop manager Pat Arnell and costumed interpreter and archer Chris Figgins.

In addition to standard 500ml bottles, there is a limited edition range of 250 available in champagne-style bottles, and the Mary Rose is raffling an additional bottle

with embellished Tudor-style glasses.

Shep, a beer aficionado, said Raise a Glass was "a fine beer for a fine occasion."

"Considering the strength of the beer [9.5 per cent] and the fact that it is hand-bottled, it really is a beer fit for a king," said Lucy Wright, Sales and Marketing Manager for Oakleaf.

The Mary Rose sank in a squall while sailing out to meet a French fleet off the isle of Wight in 1545; hundreds drowned in the Solent as King Henry VIII looked on from Southsea Castle.

Rediscovered in the 1960s, the wreck was extensively dived until the remains of her hull were brought up on October 11 1982 in a multi-million pound operation.



● Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, in his role as Commander Allied Maritime Component Command, Northwood, visited NATO Maritime Group 1 during their historic 12,500-mile round-Africa deployment. Admiral Burnell-Nugent is pictured above going on board Portuguese ship ARP Alvares Cabral in Cape Town

Welcome guests – now evil pests...

THERE are intruders at large at Clyde Naval Base – they stand six feet tall, can regenerate at rapid speed and destroy any local rivals.

The unwelcome visitors are known pests and experts are preparing to exterminate them.

Introduced for ornamental purposes in the 1800s, Japanese Knotweed was used at Faslane as screening in the 1960s.

But wherever it grows, it will strangle natural flora and fauna.

The plant has a bamboo-like stalk and wide green leaves, and as it can damage infrastructure, a base-wide initiative aims to strike at the root of the problem – literally.

"This plant is extremely invasive," said John Thomson, of Estates Directorate Clyde.

"We [EDC] along with Babcock Naval service's environmental teams and the Royal Navy's Director Safety Assurance have begun tackling the problem.

"A fingernail's length of root is enough to start a new plant, which can grow at four inches a day.

"Some chemical treatment has already begun."

Any base staff who are aware of these rapidly-growing plants are to report any sightings to the estates management department.

But Japanese Knotweed is certainly not a problem limited to the base.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), lists the plant as one of the most destructive.

Ironically, however, if coming across knotweed, one should not disturb or damage the plant as this would be an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which states that it is an offence to plant or cause this species to grow in the wild.

Digging or excavating within seven metres of the plant could cause vigorous re-growth.

The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990, Duty of Care Regulations 1991, states that cut knotweed material and soil containing rhizomes – roots – must be disposed of as controlled waste.

Trafalgar Day service

THE White Ensign will fly over Exeter Cathedral on October 21 for the annual service to celebrate Nelson's victory at Trafalgar.

Contingents from HMS Raleigh and HMS Vivid will be amongst those attending the service at which the Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy, Ven John Green.

Music will be provided by the Royal Marines Band CTRM, and the Royal Naval Guild of Bellringers will ring a Trafalgar Day peal.

Everybody is welcome to the attend the service, which starts at 11.30am.

Outlook bright for Buccaneer

DESPITE the need to work around this summer's miserable weather conditions, steady progress is being made on repainting an historic Naval Buccaneer at Newark Air Museum.

XN964 was on board HMS Victorious for what is believed to have been the first operational deployment of the Buccaneer, to the Far East from 1963 to 1965.

In addition to the weather conditions, restoration in the cockpit proved problematic when the locking/release mechanism proved reluctant to work.

Assistance provided to the restoration team has resolved the problem, and they are now able to step up their efforts with the

acquisition of a crew ladder, allowing full access to the cockpit.

The Buccaneer (right), listed as a "significant" airframe on the National Aviation Heritage Register, will retain the original white and grey colour scheme it wore in its early Service days with 801 Naval Air Squadron.

A large part of the de-corrosion phase has now been completed, while work continues on undercarriage bays.

The team are still keen to establish contact with any former Fleet Air Arm personnel that served with the squadrons and units from which XN964 operated.

These include AHU, 801 NAS (HMS Victorious), 736 NAS, 803 NAS, RAE Bedford and RRE Pershore.





● Going up – Marine Cadets climbing at their summer camp

So much to do, so little time...

MARINE Cadets from all over the UK attended this year's summer camp to take part in activities both familiar and new.

This year the 250 cadets were based at the 45-acre EBO Adventure Centre at Fremington, Devon, which provided them with exciting opportunities to try surfing, kitesurfing and rock climbing.

One of the new activities for the cadets was coastering, a mixture of swimming, traversing and cliff jumping, coupled with the chance to visit blowholes and caves – and it proved very popular.

Cadets also undertook the gruelling assault course and climbing wall at the Royal Marines training base at Chivenor and visited the quad bike centre nearby.

Clay pigeon shooting, map-reading, weapons training and navigation were all on offer as well as the chance to be one of the lucky 15 cadets who won the raffle for a helicopter ride.

Senior Marine Cadets for the first time had their own Command Cadre and a programme tailored to suit their greater skills and experience.

Staff training for adult volunteers also formed part of the week's programme, and it was felt by all those participating that new standards had been set and that maximum benefit and enjoyment had been achieved at all levels.



● Getting wet – on the Chivenor assault course

Paddle power is rewarded

OVER the summer, ten cadets from the Oban unit have been learning to kayak at the Killbowie Outward Bound Centre.

All ten cadets achieved their level 1 kayak certificate after performing a wide range of manoeuvres and strokes.

A key part of the assessment was to demonstrate their proficiency in capsizing the kayak and in the subsequent recovery and emptying of the craft – quite an achievement, given that many of the cadets had never set foot in a kayak at the start of the four-week course!

The cadets will now begin working towards their level 2 certificates, and will take their kayaks into a pool environment to train over the winter months.

● Oban cadets training in gloomy conditions at Killbowie in the west of Scotland



● From left: PPO Ian Offord, LC James Wickenden, POC Hayden Clarke, POC Jimmy Johnson, PPO Laura Holby, and CI James Monk

Essex team strikes gold on sailing trip

SIX Essex sea cadets and junior staff have become the first to get their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award as part of a new Sea Cadet DoE sail training operation.

The cadets spent four days aboard TS Leopold Muller, a 35ft

Westerly Oceanquest yacht, sailing independently around the Suffolk and Essex coasts in strong winds that gusted to gale force.

They also spent time investigating the historic coastal defences of the region and conducted a survey on the types of shipping using the area.

"It was an intense learning experience but we had a really good time," said PPO Laura Holby from the Walton-on-the-Naze unit, who was part of the team.

Anthony Mayhew, DoE assessor from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Thames Coastguard, added: "This team of young people did a terrific job in very trying weather conditions.

"Their attention to

matters of safety was particularly commendable and they are a credit to themselves and the Sea Cadets."

Resources and safety cover were provided by Sea Cadet London Area's specialist coastal training centre TS Rebel.

TS Rebel, a coastal training station based on the East Coast, provides a wide range of sailing and powerboat training for Sea Cadets.

It is a Recognised Training Centre for the RYA and an Independent Operating Authority for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

TS Rebel, in Walton-on-the-Naze, moors its fleet at Titchmarsh Marina.

Over the course of a sailing season TS Rebel provides over 350 course places for cadets, and the unit would expect to award more than 200 sailing qualifications.

Medway unit builds memorial

UP TO now there has been no specific memorial in Medway in the public domain to commemorate Service personnel who died in the Falklands War.

But that has changed, thanks to the Medway Towns unit.

After consulting with the RN Benevolent Trust at Pembroke House, and the South Atlantic Association, the unit decided to build and dedicate such a memorial on a concrete plinth at the front of Pembroke House, in Oxford Road, Gillingham.

The aim of the memorial is to provide a lasting reminder for the public of the sacrifices made in 1982 – not just those who died, but also survivors – which is both fitting and poignant.

The Mayor of Medway, Cllr Val Goulden, was due to be Inspecting Officer at the parade, and to perform the dedication ceremony as *Navy News* went to press.

The memorial was designed and built by CPO Stephen Baxter, and is in the form of an anchor laid across a mound of rocks.

The accompanying brass plaque bears the inscription *In commemoration of the personnel who served in the Falklands War 1982, those who paid the ultimate price and those who came home to live with the memory. With the grateful thanks of those who remained at home. Dedicated Sunday 23rd September 2007.*

The RNA has invited all affiliated ship associations to take part in the parade, and the Medway Towns unit have invited many other organisations, including the Royal British Legion and local cadets organisations.

Rivals vie on River Thames

CADETS from the Maidenhead and Windsor went head-to-head on the River Thames as *Navy News* went to press.

The two units locked horns for the Prince Philip Challenge Trophy, with Windsor hoping to take the trophy from Maidenhead as the event took place in 'home waters', next to the Windsor Leisure Centre.

The event featured canoeing and pulling races on the river, with an additional event on dry land.

See next month for details.

Busy summer

A SUMMER camp at HMS Bristol in Portsmouth was just one of the various activities undertaken by Northampton and Wellingborough cadets over the school holiday period.

A party of 14 cadets and six instructors joined a total of more than 200 staff and cadets from 30 units at the camp, trying their hand at skills including navigation, expedition training and many types of boating activities.

Shortly after, 23 cadets and nine instructors headed north to Inskip, near Preston, for a different sort of camp, including flights with the RAF, offshore survival techniques with the Merchant Navy, climbing, mountain biking and archery.

Residents delighted by House bands

TWO units from Kent combined to entertain the residents of Pembroke House.

Sea Cadets from the Medway Towns unit and Marine Cadets from Chatham Marine unit mustered in their best uniform for the retired RN Servicemen, women and spouses who live at the residential care home.

Displays including the hornpipe and a performance by the Corps of Drums delighted

residents and staff alike, who clapped along to encourage the youngsters.

The Chatham contingent, resplendent in their traditional pith helmets, played a rousing medley of drum sets, and were joined by LC Jade Johnson, who has also been learning with them.

For many of the residents and staff, it was the perfect end to a memorable day, after they had spent the afternoon on a boat trip up the River Medway.

There was also a tot to be had from a bottle of rum

presented to the home by the Sea Cadet Instructor in charge, PPO Caroline Mannington.

The Corps has had a long association with the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, who own Pembroke House, supporting them and raising funds.

In return the youngsters get to meet veteran seafarers and hear stories from their heydays.

Last year Medway Towns unit was presented with the home's old minibus when the RNA bought a new model for the residents.



● Chatham Marine's Corps of Drums entertain the residents at Pembroke House



● Out: Cdre Laurie Brokenshire

Out with the old, in with the new

AFTER three years at the helm of the Sea Cadet Corps, Cdre Laurie Brokenshire retired this year.

During a critical and exciting phase of the Corps' life, Laurie brought his own inimitable style to the role.

To give just one example, the Corps is not thought to have had a member of the Magic Circle on staff before...

Corps staff and cadets wish him a well-deserved retirement and every success in his future endeavours.

The Royal Navy has decided to appoint a serving officer to the role, and Capt Jonathan Fry will join as Director of Operations and Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps later this month.

He is an Engineer Officer and has been working at Fleet HQ in Portsmouth as Fleet Marine Engineer Officer (Surface Ships) and professional head of the Marine Engineering (ME) sub-branch since May 2005.

During his 28 years of service he has served as a Commander Marine Engineer Officer on HMS Invincible, worked as a project manager within the Defence Procurement Agency and gained experience of training young people in marine engineering at HMS Sultan.

As Director of Operations and Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps his primary role will be to provide operational leadership to the Corps, with specific focus on the safe delivery of training.

The Royal Navy's decision to put a serving officer into the post has been welcomed by the Corps and reflects the importance that the RN attaches to the charity and the Sea Cadet Corps.



● In: Capt Jonathan Fry

Boat party

NUCLEAR submarine HMS Turbulent ended a period of operations by hosting sponsors and affiliates in Devonport.

Joining sponsors Admiral Sir Desmond and Lady Cassidi were cadets from TS Obdurate, the Warrington unit – the T-boat is affiliated to the Cheshire town.

Visitors were given a tour of the boat, with practical demonstrations in fire-fighting, escape and a simulated Spearfish torpedo attack.



● Cadets and staff from Arbroath unit battle white water rapids in the Austrian Alps

The hills are alive with the sound of Scottish music

A PARTY of cadets and staff from Arbroath unit spent ten days in the Austrian Alps on their summer camp.

Based in the beautiful village of Bach, tucked into the Lechtal Valley amidst the mountains of western Austria, the cadets undertook a busy programme which combined strenuous outdoor activities with some more cultural interludes.

Various members of the group – 29 cadets and eight staff – tried their hand at canyoning, rock-climbing, white water rafting, swimming and shooting.

They took a trip on the Alpine coaster at Imst – the world's longest, taking riders down a twisting, dipping 3.5km track up to 6m above the ground.

A cable car ride took the party to the Jochelspitz, an elevation of some 1,800m, and on the walk down the strains of *Flower of Scotland* could be heard across the Alpine meadows.

A trip to the German town of Fussen allowed cadets to go ice skating, and

they returned to the same town several days later to do a spot of last-minute shopping.

Their last evening was spent on their second trip to the nine-pin bowling lanes in Bach.

The shooting competition saw AC Steven Boyd win gold, ahead of

Commanding Officer David Gerrard (silver) and First Lieutenant Justin Bothwell (bronze).

On the female side, gold went to unit assistant Amy Bolland, a former cadet, OC Catherine Macfarlane took silver and PO Melissa Edwards was in bronze position.

Privileged view

ICE patrol ship HMS Endurance hosted a visit by 50 excited Sea Scouts of the 1st Southbourne unit, for some of whom it was their first time on board a Royal Navy ship.

Endurance is in dry dock for maintenance before an extended deployment later this year, prompting one of the younger scouts to ask: "Has your ship got a puncture?"

The scouts toured Endurance with members of the ship's company, who were impressed with the Scout's knowledge of both Endurance and the RN.

One highlight was the bridge and Captain's chair, and the view from the monkey deck (see right), but they were also impressed by the selection of Playstation games available in the Wardroom.

Their visit ended with the scouts taking part in the Sunset ceremony (see below).

Pictures: Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner



● OC Rhys Lyall, of the Swansea unit, at the war memorial in tribute to those who served in the Merchant Navy and lost their lives for their country. A total of 207 names were read out on the roll of honour during the service, held on Merchant Navy Day, when Sea Cadets stood alongside Merchant Navy veterans, members of the Association, families and dignitaries

Dedicated transport

LOUGHBOROUGH unit, with the help and support of the Rotary Club, have now replaced the minibus which spectacularly blew up in June 2006 on the way back from a ship's visit to Liverpool.

Cadets were stranded for four hours as recovery was arranged for the bus, which had smoke pouring from the engine.

Over the past year transport consisted of staff members' cars, which limited ship visits and the like.

The new bus, which came via Leicestershire Police – who also generously provided six months road tax and MOT – cost £2,000, of which £1,500 was provided by the Rotary Club.

Members of the club attended a dedication and blessing service at the unit HQ on Beeches Road.

The blessing was conducted by the unit's chaplain, Rev David Featonby, and attended by the cadets, staff and committee of the unit, including Deputy Mayoress Maureen Pacey.

Loughborough's CO, S/Lt Kay Adey, also praised TI Mick Vann and his employers, I&J Commercial Spray Centre Loughborough Ltd, who made the minibus look "like new", with a new paint job and the application of the unit's name and telephone number.

S/Lt Adey said: "A minibus is very much a necessity to enable us to get cadets to competitions, training venues and visits to ships.

"We will have to do a lot of fundraising to pay for the upkeep, but this is outweighed by the use we will get out of the bus.

"We cannot thank the Rotary Club enough for helping us to get this bus."



Salvage writes

NEVER judge a book by its cover, so the adage goes.

Or perhaps by its title. **Admiralty Salvage in Peace and War** (*Pen & Sword* £19.99 ISBN 978-1844-155651) by Tony Booth is much more of a little gem than its name might suggest.

Within its pages are fascinating stories – invariably untold and most definitely unsung – of bravery above and below the surface from a century of salvage operations.

As the battle in the bocage raged furiously in late June 1944, German long-range coastal guns turned their attention to any ships in the Channel bound for the Normandy beachhead.

Shells plunged down upon the Empire Lough, a 3,000-ton cargo and ammunition ship, off Folkestone, setting her ablaze from bow to stern.

So fierce were the flames that when Capt Victor Nichols and his tug Lady Brassey arrived on the scene, the cargo ship's name plate had been burned off.

Somehow Nichols and his crew attached a bow line. They doused the Empire Lough with foam, but the flames could not be subdued.

Ammunition soon began 'cooking off', raining shrapnel and bullets down upon the tug. The flames spread to the towline, but Nichols managed to run the Empire Lough aground, out of harm's way.

Such bravery probably barely registered

in the papers of the day, wrapped up as they were with events in Normandy.

And it is just one act in a varied list of salvage operations which began with the loss of the Royal George 225 years ago.

The author directs most of his attention to the past century of salvage work by the Admiralty, work prompted by the growing fear of global conflagration – and the distinct possibility of disabled warships littering the shores of the UK.

And within a decade of the RN seriously looking into salvage operations, those tugs, sailors and divers were called upon as the Great War ravaged the oceans.

The Admiralty salvage teams saved ships – and lives. More than 800 vessels were recovered between 1914 and 1918 (mostly merchantmen, but also 90 RN ships, 11 U-boats and two Zeppelins).

Not all the Admiralty's salvage work has been in time of war, and not all its recovered craft belonged to the RN. In early 1954 British pride was at stake when airliner Yoke Peter plunged into the Mediterranean off Elba, killing, *inter alia*, the noted BBC correspondent and author Chester Wilmut.

Mountbatten offered destroyers of the Mediterranean fleet to find the Comet's wreckage, as well as deep-sea TV cameras.

In a two-month operation, most of Yoke Peter was recovered. The Admiralty salvaged the aircraft, but not the Comet's reputation; using the wreckage, experts at Farnborough



● The mangled wreckage of two Sea Kings from HMS Ark Royal which collided off Iraq in the opening days of Operation Telic in 2003

determined metal fatigue had caused the tragedy. An improved Comet eventually entered service, but by then Boeing and McDonnell Douglas also had jet airliners in service.

Bringing the story of salvage up to date, the author deals with work off Iraq in 2003, notably the recovery of the wreckage of two Sea Kings from HMS Ark Royal which collided, killing all seven crew.

The recovery operation put man before machine; the salvage teams brought the bodies of the dead up first (all but one man was found) then raised the remains of the

two helicopters. And when the recovery was complete, the divers returned to the two craters driven into the sandy seabed, leaving a plaque from the crew of Ark Royal to the missing flier.

Throughout this story, Admiralty salvage experts have been as brave in many cases as the men in the front line – and at the cutting edge of underwater exploration and recovery.

“Wider recognition of these exceptional men is long overdue,” writes Tony Booth. Thanks to his efforts the public should be better informed in future.



Not such happy days

FEW people know more about the U-boat in the English-speaking world than Lawrence Paterson.

After six books on the *U-boatwaffe*, you might have thought he would have exhausted the subject.

Not a bit of it. In fact **U-boat Combat Missions** (*Chatham*, £19.99 ISBN 978-1861763204) is probably his most accessible and most attractive book to date, a beautifully-produced work you can dip into – and dip out of – on the human aspects of the war beneath the waves.

Paterson has spent years interviewing U-boat veterans, picking over their letters, collecting ephemera to create a very personal history of German submarines.

Historians have traditionally cherry-picked a few choice quotes from *Das Boot* (a novel by a *Propaganda Kompanie* reporter who wasn't especially liked by *U-bootmänner*) or Herbert Werner's *Iron Coffins*.

Peppered as it is with first-person accounts, Paterson's book should provide much more source material for future historians to chew over.

In particular, the many colour images bring the world of the U-boats back to life – from the innards of the submarines to propaganda booklets, standard-issue shorts, jackets, binoculars, bandages, crockery, and caps.

And by focusing on the individuals, Paterson shows that the *matrose* – the German equivalent of matelot – really wasn't very different from his British foe.

He celebrated passing the equator (complete with 'crossing the line' certificate signed by Neptune). He endured cramped conditions. He looked forward to his meals, even though fresh food normally ran out within a week of a patrol beginning, he let his hair down ashore (although parties were never quite as wild as those depicted in *Das Boot* apparently), he enjoyed affiliations with cities across the Reich (much as British warships are bound to towns and cities), and he knuckled down to the drudgery of life at sea.

And the ocean was as much their enemy as the might of the Royal Navy.

Obersteuermann (quartermaster) Heinz Theen clambered on to the bridge of U653 on Atlantic patrol in February 1943 to relieve the first watch. He found it empty.

“Despite well-fastened harnesses, four seamen had been snatched to their deaths by the cruel sea in an instant,” he recalled.

As for the men in charge, they had no illusions about the risks they ran daily – even if their masters in Berlin still did.

U-boat historians label certain periods of the war when the German boats were in the ascendancy – such as the autumn of 1940 – as 'happy times'. U61's captain Jurgen Oesten dismisses such glib historical tags. “The so-called 'Happy Time' is a myth,” Oesten told the author. “There were too many plaques on walls remembering fallen comrades right from the war's beginning.”

Research over the past decade has suggested that the U-boat peril was never as great as portrayed at the time by friend and foe alike.

Jurgen Oesten is in no doubt how far from victory he and his comrades were.

“I think, looking back, we managed to cut about one per cent of the supplies to Britain,” he laments.

Time for revision

TWO old friends have received 21st-Century makeovers, reissued with additional words and images.

Gregor Lamb's **Sky Over Scapa** (*Bellavista* £25 from 3 Sabiston Crescent, Kirkwall, Orkney) first appeared in 1991, charting the history of aircraft and their squadrons based in and around the great natural harbour which was once home to the Grand Fleet.

At the height of activity around Scapa, there were 15 squadrons based in the Orkneys, supporting upwards of ten aircraft carriers – and defending the Fleet from German air attack.

The author has tweaked his original work, eradicating any errors, updated details of the tragic losses, and included his 'aviation diary' which month by month lists the Fleet Air Squadrons stationed at the four air stations, of which RNAS Twatt is perhaps the most well-known.

And if it's a name which produces sniggers six decades later, well FAA chaps thought it was hilarious (the name comes from Old Norse for 'clearing' apparently), presenting VIP guests with a scroll (and a rather rude ditty) celebrating the 'Freedom of Twatt'.

Twatt is no more; it closed shortly after the end of the war... when RNAS Culdrose was just coming into being.

Geoff Wakeham's **RNAS Culdrose** (*Tempus* £12.99, ISBN 978-0752-443812) is a comprehensive photographic history of the Cornish air station.

It's ten years since Geoff celebrated 50 years of Culdrose; a decade on he marks the airfield's diamond jubilee, including a selection of colour images.

Culdrose has changed substantially since 1997; it's home to the Merlin (and training facilities); hangars have been re-built and 1970s accommodation blocks have been hauled down to be replaced by modern flats for aircrew.

And yet many things remain the same. Culdrose is still the biggest employer in the area. It is still home to the 'bagger' Sea Kings (although today's variant is much improved on that of 1997) and it is still at the forefront of search and rescue operations.

Proof of that comes courtesy of the very last image: the crew of the container ship Napoli crossing the Culdrose tarmac having been plucked from their stricken vessel.

America's Drake

WHEN the fast-growing US Navy was looking for a hero of its own in the early years of the 20th Century it decided to deify John Paul Jones, who had been the leading commander in the navy raised by the rebel 'Continental Congress' at the outset of the War of American Independence.

This was ironic in a number of ways, not least in that Jones had never been an officer in the 'United States Navy' as such, having died before the fledgling Republic raised such a force in 1794, *writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford*.

Nevertheless vessels under his command had forced three British warships to strike their colours – a unique achievement in an otherwise lacklustre American naval record in the 'Revolutionary War'.

So the body of Jones was ceremonially returned from its unmarked grave in Paris to the crypt of the grand Chapel of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis where it resides in Nelsonian splendour as an inspiration to generations of American naval officers.

Frank Walker has provided us with a new book on Jones, **Maverick Hero** (*Spellmount* £20, ISBN 978-186227-375-7) which is unusual as it is written by both a philosopher and a non-American.

In his introduction the author hopes that by “looking at events from a different viewpoint” he has been able to furnish some fresh and valid insights into the man.”

He has indeed succeeded in his aim. His very readable account prompted some new thoughts, albeit not always to Jones' credit.

His taking of the sloop HMS Drake in 1778 was clearly a one-sided struggle against an at best semi-combatant vessel engaged on recruiting duties.

The epic Battle of Flamborough Head the following year now makes a great deal more sense also.

The two-deck 44-gun fifth rate HMS Serapis (not a 'frigate'

as described by Walker) was defeated in her close fought action with Jones' converted Indiaman Bonhomme Richard in part by a lucky grenade that caused mayhem on one of her gun decks.

The less established and restrained Americans seem to have been more prone to use explosive and incendiary devices at sea than the European navies.

Jones had fitted out his ship to emphasise the use of fire from the rigging, a sensible ploy for a less-well-trained crew whose main role was commerce raiding.

The other factor was the existence of another significant American unit engaging Serapis, Captain Landais' frigate Alliance. I see no reason to disagree with Serapis' heroic commander, Captain Pearson, that the raking fire from this undamaged vessel made further resistance useless.

Jones had fallen out with Landais and accused his colleague of having fired into Bonhomme Richard – probably true given contemporary gunnery as both ships were locked together alongside each other but whether it was intended is more controversial. The controversy between Jones and Landais ran and ran.

Jones (*pictured, above right*) had always been a difficult man with a hot temper.

A merchant seaman who had made a financial killing in the slave trade (participating in which he clearly had few, if any, of the scruples later attributed to him) he probably went on the stage for a brief period (he was always a showman) before a stroke of luck – the death of the captain of his new ship – saw him take command himself.

He soon found himself in trouble with the authorities, first being accused (probably wrongly) of having a sailor flogged to death and then (more accurately) of killing a mutinous sailor in Tobago.

Jones may well have been acting in self-defence but he thought it prudent to flee to the mainland American colonies with a new identity Paul Jones.

Masonic connections saw him



The Grove Review

obtain a commission in the new Continental Navy which allowed him both to fight those with whom he had legal differences and indulge a long-standing desire for naval command.

His positive features of boldness, resolution and resourcefulness usually made up for his character flaws and, as we have seen, he had some success, albeit at a price in controversy.

As Walker rightly argues, Jones was much more than a mere privateer, still less a pirate.

He had real strategic vision, wishing to divert attention and inflict economic damage by mounting raids on the British coast as well as capturing ships off it.

He was let down in his attempt to burn Whitehaven by the poor material in Ranger's crew, one of whom defected, and others of whom preferred to drink than go about their duties.

His proposed raid on Liverpool was abandoned after a security leak – although not before Bonhomme Richard was compromised by modifications to carry troops.

A raid by Jones' squadron on Leith was prevented at the last minute by adverse weather. Indeed luck was never quite with Jones – even Flamborough Head was an equivocal victory, the escort was taken but the important Baltic convoy was saved.

All this and more can be gleaned from Walker's entertaining,

thoughtful and informative account but the book does have a few flaws.

It is not good on naval detail or background, particularly the development of American naval organisation.

The author makes no distinction between the Continental Navy and the later United States Navy (that for a time rather disowned its predecessor).

Indeed, a reader could be forgiven for thinking from Walker's account that Jones' navy continued. Its paying off certainly explains Jones inability to become a flag officer in a non-existent fleet!

The book reads at times as if Jones was continuing in service after the war and strangely credits him with playing a part in founding the US Naval Academy, something that did not take place for another 60 years.

Jones himself, now unemployed, went to Russia to work for Catherine the Great, a period covered by the author in a rather vague and unsatisfactory manner.

He does, however, make the point that Jones was probably framed in the charges of sexual misconduct that contributed to his career as a Russian flag officer being sadly curtailed. Walker suspects problems with the regime caused by Jones' freemasonry connections. He is probably right; these could cut both ways.

Despite a decade's research, the author, rather surprisingly, does not include in his sources the John Paul Jones papers themselves in the microfilm edition that my former Annapolis colleague Professor Jim Bradford laboured so long and hard to collect.

Walker only cites, as 'a published source', the 'Guide' Jim produced to help access this important archive. Nevertheless the field work the author has carried out, notably at Whitehaven, produces much useful detail, illustration and discussion.

In all, this is a useful contribution to the literature on an interesting man, the Americans' Drake, rather than their Nelson. Just as Drake was never a member of the Royal Navy (and was much more of a pirate/privateer), Jones was never an officer in the US Navy.

The accomplishments of both were nevertheless seized upon as useful to inculcate standards of bravery and conduct in the later, more institutionalised setting.

Founder's day for HMS Clyde

BRITAIN'S newest-commissioned warship has been celebrating T200. No, they're not two years behind the times aboard HMS Clyde – the T200 refers to the Marquis of Tamandaré and the 200th anniversary of his birth. He's not a well-known figure here in Britain, but he's a national hero in Brazil, where he's regarded as the founder of the South American country's Navy.

To mark their leader's birthday, the Brazilians staged a fleet review – a parade of 25 ships comprising the world's navies, including the USA, Portugal, Argentina and Mexico.

Patrol ship Clyde, on her maiden voyage, joined the line of ships as they glided past Ipanema and Copacabana beaches, the statue of Christ the Redeemer, Sugar Loaf Mountain, and hundreds of thousands of Brazilians, eager to catch the spectacle.

With the review concluded, the ships anchored in Rio harbour, where they stayed the following day for an inspection by Brazil's defence minister, who sailed among the fleet admiring the gleaming ships and sailors in their whites.

"As with Trafalgar 200, the excitement and enthusiasm for this review has been unmistakable," said Lt Cdr Paul Pitcher, Clyde's Commanding Officer.

"What better place to have such a parade than off the famous beaches of Rio? The procession along them was a fabulous spectacle."

Clyde has one more stop to make, in Uruguay, before she replaces HMS Dumbarton Castle as the Falklands' guardship.



● A Frank explanation... Guides show Victory's admiral's cabin to motor racing supremo Sir Frank Williams
Picture: LA(Phot) Emz Tucker, FRPU Whale Island

Formula for Victory

WHAT has the world of Formula 1 in common with the world of the Senior Service?

On the face of it, probably very little.

Except that one of the sport's legendary figures is a big military history buff.

Sir Frank Williams is the man behind Williams Racing, the team which gave Britain the F1 title courtesy of drivers Nigel Mansell

and Damon Hill. The motor racing supremo told the respected journal *MotorSport* he had a great passion for military history. Said article was seen by official Royal Navy historian Jock Gardner of the Naval Historical Branch... who has a great passion for motor sport. The result was a VIP visit for Sir Frank, who's been in a wheelchair for the past two decades following a serious car crash, to Portsmouth Naval Base. He began at the NHB, then

moved the short distance to Nelson's flagship for a tour of HMS Victory, including the Great Cabin. The NHB team rooted out numerous artefacts for Sir Frank, notably photographs, accounts, and magazines charting the deeds of the Naval Brigades in the Boer War, plus a magnificently-produced series of maps and diagrams charting the defences of Ladysmith (military maps are the F1 man's particular area of interest). As for the Williams team, it's not as divorced from the Senior Service as you might think; Williams' long-time technical director (now engineering director) Patrick Head was briefly in the Senior Service in the 1960s, while another of the senior engineers is a former nuclear submariner.

"I asked him one day out of interest: 'How deep and fast do they go?'" said Sir Frank. "He couldn't tell me. 'I've signed the Official Secrets Act and my mates are still down there.'" "Patrick has a strong military bearing, a strong military voice, and he expects a strong military discipline among the team." And as a leader of men and

inspirational figure in sport, Sir Frank was keen to know whether Nelson was "as remarkable a man as he is made out to be". "We think so," said Capt Christopher Page, head of the Historical Branch. "He was a flawed individual, but aren't we all?" ■ HMS Victory has been named the second most important historical treasure in the country. TV channel UKTV History has spent six months polling Britons about their top 100 historical sites across the land, from the obvious choices such as Windsor Castle and the Tower of London to lesser-known gems like Twyford waterworks. At the very top of the tree, perhaps not too surprisingly, was Stonehenge. And right behind it was Nelson's flagship. "I knew that we were in with a good chance, but with such strong competition from the likes of Windsor Castle, I did not expect us to come second," said HMS Victory's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr John Scivier. "I'm absolutely thrilled at the result, one that justly ratifies Victory's position in the heart of the UK population."

Silent... but deadly

WHILE her sister Blyth was showing Bahraini sailors how to cope with disaster, HMS Ramsey was having a blast in Gulf waters. The minehunter joined a sizeable US Navy minehunting force – USS Ardent, Dextrous, Gladiator and Scout, plus Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 6 and Blackhawks of Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 – in a concerted search and destroy exercise, organised from the 60,000-ton assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard. The Americans sowed the Gulf with lots of (dummy) mines – some on the surface, some on the seabed, and some tethered – and then let the Anglo-American force deal with the nasty 'crop'. The helicopters went in force to find the minefield, then the ships and divers moved in to find, fix and recover... or blow up the trial mines. Over a 48-hour period, Ramsey found five mines: two on the surface, the remainder ground mines lying on the seabed. Two of the latter were dispatched by explosive charges – which proved a popular spectator sport. "Many of the ship's company mustered on the upper deck to witness the spectacular effect of an underwater explosion," said Ramsey's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Jon Holmes. "The high plume of water and the loud bang – felt throughout the ship – is a sign of a job well done." The last act of the exercise was also the most demanding. Ramsey was charged with leading the Bonhomme Richard through a minefield – clearing a path for the much larger vessel to safely navigate (something the RN did for real as recently as the Iraq campaign of 2003). "Working with the US Navy was a useful experience," Lt Cdr Holmes added. "Although the end result is the same, the methods differ and the equipment used is varied. "We learned that the US sailors had nicknamed us the 'Silent Killers' because, despite frequent communication problems with the command ship, they still knew that Ramsey and her crew were out there finding and disposing mines."

● A huge plume rises from a dummy mine, disposed off by an American explosive ordnance team working with HMS Ramsey
Picture: US Navy

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Ice age dawns

THERE are some people in the Senior Service who can't wait for the summer heat to cool (*I wouldn't mind it simply appearing – Ed*).

Yep, with frost and snow looming, the RN Winter Sports Association is gearing up for an especially busy season – and looking to encourage a bumper turn-out during its annual trip to the Alps.

The association can trace its roots back to the RN Ski Club – and while the club itself no longer exists, alpine skiing remains the most popular of all the sports under the RNWSA 'umbrella'.

Many readers will no doubt remember the RN ski championships being held in Scotland when a handful of people tried to negotiate the sometimes almost barren slopes of Aviemore.

Nowadays, with the event having moved to the Alps in line with the other two Services, the alpine championships have become the biggest participatory event in the Senior Service's sporting calendar.

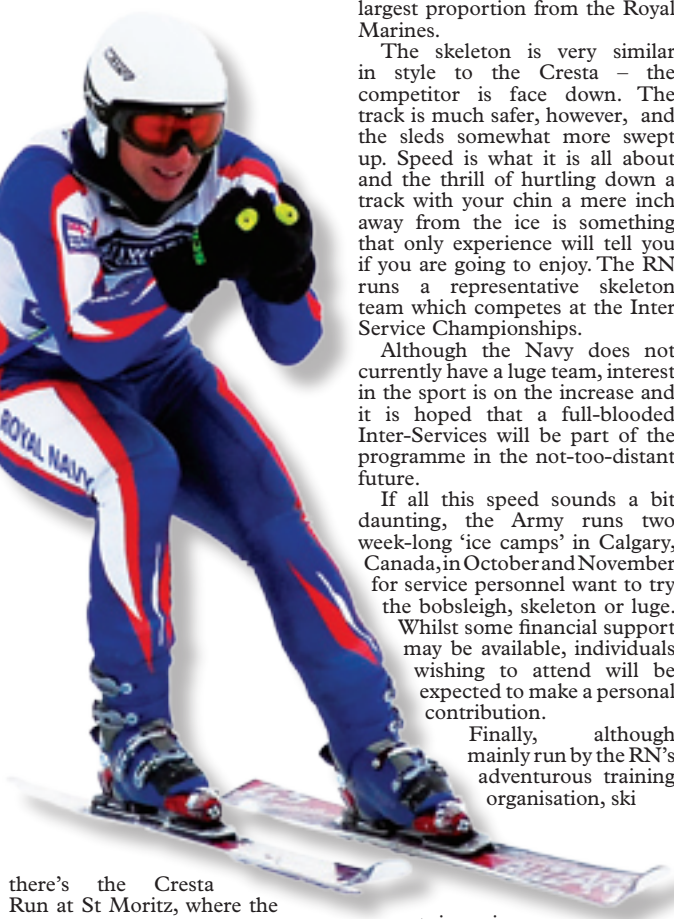
Over the past four or five years, up to 1,000 serving personnel have attended the event, often accompanied by 500 ex-servicemen, friends and families.

A recent addition to the championships is snowboarding, while traditionalists are catered for with Telemark skiing – proving increasingly popular among the Royal Marines' skiing community.

The Navy participates each year at the Inter-Services alpine championships, which encompass both skiing and snowboarding.

Through experience, knowledge and performance at the RN championships, teams of skiers and snowboarders are selected to undergo additional training followed by competition in what is the peak of representative winter sport in the Services.

However, if ice is more your thing, then the RNWSA has a number of options. For starters,



there's the Cresta Run at St Moritz, where the Senior Service lifted the crown in 2007.

Competitors (male only, sadly) are invited to lie face down on a old-fashioned sled, likened to a tea tray by some, and go all out down a track reaching speeds in excess of 60mph at times.

Whilst the Cresta Run takes place on a freshly-built track each season, the bobsleigh, skeleton bob and luge are contested on the same purpose-built track.

Bobsleigh boasts the current RN team of the year; the present GB team which competes in the World and Europa Cups and Olympics, consists almost entirely of Service personnel – with the

largest proportion from the Royal Marines.

The skeleton is very similar in style to the Cresta – the competitor is face down. The track is much safer, however, and the sleds somewhat more swept up. Speed is what it is all about and the thrill of hurtling down a track with your chin a mere inch away from the ice is something that only experience will tell you if you are going to enjoy. The RN runs a representative skeleton team which competes at the Inter Service Championships.

Although the Navy does not currently have a luge team, interest in the sport is on the increase and it is hoped that a full-blooded Inter-Services will be part of the programme in the not-too-distant future.

If all this speed sounds a bit daunting, the Army runs two week-long 'ice camps' in Calgary, Canada, in October and November for service personnel want to try the bobsleigh, skeleton or luge.

Whilst some financial support may be available, individuals wishing to attend will be expected to make a personal contribution.

Finally, although mainly run by the RN's adventurous training organisation, ski

mountaineering still falls within the RNWSA's domain. It is exactly what it says. You climb up a mountain, then ski down it.

It does require a good ski proficiency for obvious reasons, but novices are encouraged.

An introduction to ski mountaineering is usually available at the RN Alpine Championships and one, sometimes two, expeditions are run a year, usually in Europe.

If any of this has whetted your appetite contact the RNWSA Secretary Cdr Gary Skinns at HMS Temeraire, 9380 27880 or e-mail rns06@a.dii.mod.uk



● **Big fish, big pond...** LAET Si Fisher poses with his 13lb 15oz carp, captured during the RN/IRM championships at Sapphire Lake
Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RN Photographer of the Year

Reel talent on display

ANYONE who has been into a fishing tackle shop recently will be aware that **carp angling** is now the most popular discipline of the sport and the RN and RM are becoming increasingly active in it.

The sub-branch of the coarse section currently has nearly 50 members all of whom share a passion for catching specimen carp.

A more specialised type of fishing, it focuses on catching one species only, namely the king carp that comes in two main strains, common or mirror.

Membership has nearly quadrupled over the last year and the increase in numbers is attracting interest from the commercial sector with potential sponsorship deals from the likes of Dynamite Baits and Trakker.

The second match of three this year was the inaugural RN & RM AA Carp Championships at Sapphire Lakes, near Newark.

Eighteen sailors and Royal Marines pitted their angling skills against each other for the trophy and over £1,000 worth of donated prizes including a fishing holiday to Edens Lakes in France, several bait

packages, rods and bedding.

Representatives from the Fleet Air Arm, Devonport, Portsmouth and the RM competed over 48 hours.

The aim was to catch the highest total weight of carp on a lake which was known to be less productive when heavily pressured. Some excellent angling managed to produce a great competition.

The warm and still conditions were not ideal for carp angling but four different anglers banked five carp.

The next match will take place at Willow Park over the weekend of October 26-28.

If you are interested in RN/IRM carping please contact either PO Si Baker on Culdrose (93781) 2156 or PO Si Gay on (93781) 7361, or visit the forum at www.rnandmaa.org.uk/yabb/YaBB.pl

Carp championships results:

1 – Sgt Billy Faragher (CTCRM) with two fish totalling 31lb 10oz; 2 – Cpl Matt Harding (RM Band Dartmouth) biggest fish, 17lb; 3 – LAET Si Fisher (RNAS Yeovilton) one fish of 13lb 15 oz; 4 – Sgt Del Bauduin (CTCRM), one fish of 11lb 4oz; Top pair – Sgt Faragher and Sgt Jack Broughton (RM Stonehouse).

Sharks dig teeth into plate

THE Sharks Rugby 7s team travelled to their second tournament of the season at Worthing, writes WO1 Don Shaw (Fleet HQ).

The Worthing 7s Tournament is in its fifth year and is one of the major 7s events in the south, attracting many top teams.

The Sharks travelled with a strong squad with a blend of experience: senior players, including Rob Lloyd, Dave Pascoe, Carl Saunders and Josh Drauniui, and youth – 'Cowboy' John (*pictured right*), Luke Dando and Ryan Wells from the U23s.

It was also nice to welcome Les Dennis back after his time away on board HMS Endurance; Les has come back strong and fit and made an instant impression in his first 7s tournament of the season.

With 18 teams making the journey to the Raiders home ground, there were 36 matches played and a total of 1,522 points scored during the day.

The round robin matches were organised into two pools of 18 games with pool winners going straight into their respective finals.

The first game saw the Sharks drawn against RBS Royals, the No.2 seeds.

Despite dominating most of the game, the Navy team were not able to turn possession into points, eventually losing 5-7 as the Royals scored a last-minute try under the posts; our only try was scored by team captain, Rob Lloyd.

The Sharks improved continually throughout the tournament and went on to have an impressive win over Worthing in their second game 38-7. The tries were scored by Les Dennis (two), Josh Drauniui (two), Rob Lloyd and Luke Dando.

The third match saw the team



in the Plate quarter final against Spartans 7s. Again the Navy side proved that they were now excellent exponents in the art of 7s play.

Spartans left the paddock with no points to their name against an impressive 45 point Navy victory, 20 of the points coming from the hands and feet of the skipper.

The run of games in the other side of the pool saw them drawn against QJP who looked a well-balanced 7s side.

After a slow start – and losing by 14 points to 7 at half time – the Sharks got a hold of the game, spreading the QJP team across the park on both flanks and using good handling skills and pace to eventually win 33-14.

After a long hard day the Sharks had to dig deep to ensure they performed to their best in the plate final against Voyagers, a well-established 7s invitational team.

The skills, pace and commitment displayed by the Sharks in the final was wonderful to watch.

The Voyagers were treated to an

exceptional display of top-drawer 7s play.

The Sharks proved to be too much of a handful for a tiring Voyagers outfit and dominated the final, winning by 62-0.

All in all, a very impressive and pleasing 7s tournament for the Sharks and coach Billy May.

The Sharks' points tally over the five games was 183, with just 26 conceded. There was also a nice silver platter and £150 in the kitty to boot.

Team captain Rob Lloyd led by example with an impressive personal contribution of 58 points.

Carl Saunders played most of the day in the centre and made some great breaks and even more impressive defensive tackles.

'Cowboy' (*more on him below*) and Dave Pascoe played pivotal roles in the sweeper position, constantly talking to the guys in front to help keep their shape.

Les just went on and on using power and pace when required and a couple of young lads from the U23s got the taste for winning in front of a good crowd.

Meanwhile, POET(WE) Wayne 'Cowboy' John has been selected to skipper the U23 team in the build-up to the Inter-Services tournament later this year.

His play is typified by his ability to see space and use his acceleration to exploit it.

Blessed with one of the best passes in the Navy, he can provide a fly half with that all-important extra metre of room in which to play. If the team plays in his image this season it will be an exciting one to watch.

'Cowboy' has been a regular for the Navy U23 side and has competed in the last three Inter-Services tournaments at age group level as well as being an integral part of the cup winning senior side at the 2006 Commonwealth Cup.

Trophy beyond Brothers

THERE will be no Inter-Services trophy in the RN rugby league silverware cabinet again this year after the Army inflicted their first defeat in four years on the Senior Service in an incident-packed match at Burnaby Road.

The first 20 minutes were scoreless with both sides having tries disallowed; first the RN were denied for a knock-on as the ball was carried over the line, then the Army kicked through but took the ball from RN full back Kev Botwood without giving the required ten metres, so Lee Innes was also denied the four pointer.

It was Innes who broke the deadlock with a straightforward penalty in front of the posts on the 20-minute mark. This set up a flurry of scoring leading up to the half-time break. The RN struck first: a promising attack seemed to have faltered but on the last tackle prop Lewis Taylor put through a grubber which Scott Partis followed up to touch down to the left of the posts, converting his own kick to give the Brothers a 6-2 lead after half an hour.

The RN lead lasted barely three minutes. The initial break came from centre Nacamavuto who broke the Navy defence and, after the initial thrust had been halted, Army scrum half Steve Fox went over for the first of his tries. Innes was on hand to convert, 6-8 – which was how the score remained until half-time.

The first minutes of the second period were scoreless until Partis brought the RN level with a well-executed penalty from 30 metres out.

Again the Army responded within a few minutes with Fox again going over for the score; this time Innes was unsuccessful with the kick.

The soldiers now had the initiative and despite much hard work by the home side, the breaks would not come. The Army pack dominated the latter stages of the game, with the wings taking advantage of the space available.

It was Fox who sealed the match with his third try of the night and again Innes was on target to add the extra two points.

A disappointment for all concerned on the blue side but the Army, with a lot of experience in the pack, stifled the Navy's play.

As usual RN playmaker Scott Partis was targeted by some extremely over-zealous hits from the Army at virtually every opportunity.

Earlier in the day the Army's A grade took revenge for last year's defeat to the Navy in another great match. All memories of a washed-out summer were banished as the A grade sides took to the pitch in bright sunlight with the thermometer showing 70°F plus.

The A grade competition is getting ever more popular, especially in the Navy with competition for places as fierce as that of the Senior squad.

In a similar way to the corresponding fixture last year both sides tested each other but put no points on the board until the 25-minute mark

As a result of a defensive error after some good Navy pressure the first points were posted by RN scrum half Wayne Lewis, who slotted over a simple enough penalty. More exchanges between the two teams were to no avail as the score remained 2-0 to the RN at the break.

The RN started the second half the better with a break from Baz Sloan putting the Army under early pressure.

Tackled deep in the Army half Sloan moved the ball back into centre field allowing Lewis to hoist a kick into the heart of the Army defence.

The Navy challenged for the ball, beat the Army defence and sub Rob Lackin grounded the ball to stretch the Navy lead.

A successful kick again from Lewis gave the Senior Service an eight-point lead.

The RN continued to press for further scores and indeed crossed twice only for the referee to judge that the ball had not been grounded.

These two let-offs for the Army plus an injury to influential centre Tyler Helm gave the soldiers the opening they were looking for and in the last quarter of the match they ran in four tries – all goaled by centre 'Vic' Reeve.

It was a disappointing result for coach Tony Newcombe and manager Mark Brocklesby, but certainly for the first 60 or so minutes the RN were more than a match for their Army opponents.

Experienced hooker Mark Robinson, in his first season with NRNL, had a good game with full back Adam McCrohan impressing. Regulars Lee Hunter and 'Jack' Lemmon also made good contributions but on the night it was the Army that came out on top 24-8.



● Cupid strikes... LOGS Melissa Cupid (RNAS Yeovilton) flies towards the pit in the long jump

Maintaining the balance

Continued from back page

bred in St Vincent. Amongst the others, approximately 40 per cent, including nine men and eight women, were making their debut at Inter-Services level, with five of these trainees at the Royal Marines School of Music.

Future success depends on recruiting similar levels of new athletes in years to come whilst retaining the interest and motivation of those who move on to new assignments.

Whilst CPO Paul Hillyard (PORFLOT) is likely to remain highly motivated for future years, this was most likely his final representative appearance in a Royal Navy vest at the age of 53.

Gradually improving his performances in many events, as befits a decathlete, he has set a fine example to younger team members, notably through his noble and sporting manner.

He will be sorely missed for his pole-vaulting and multi-event prowess and also for his boyish 50-something enthusiasm. It is hoped he will remain involved in some capacity as he tries to better his runners-up position achieved in the 2007 Veterans (50-plus) National Decathlon Championship.

The 2007 Inter-Services Championships also marked the final event as President of RNAA for Rear Admiral Rees Ward prior to his retirement from the Service. A small presentation was made to mark the occasion.

Remaining remarkably fit over the years, Rear Admiral Ward was previously a Scottish international 1,500m/sub-four-minute miler and cross-country runner.

To date he is the only known Royal Navy winner of a race covered live by the BBC with commentary by David Coleman; in the early 1970s he won the Southern 1,500m at Crystal Palace with a storming sprint finish off the final bend.

Whilst the women were

achieving relative success at the Inter-Services level, the men achieved their highest finishing place (seventh) for many years in the Southern Men's League.

Competing in six league matches, meeting each of the other 24 teams once, there was proof that the RN were as good as any team in the league... they just need many of the best athletes to be available.

Proof came in the penultimate match hosted at Victory Stadium where the previously unbeaten and eventual league champions Cambridge Harriers were narrowly beaten, their first defeat for two seasons.

The final match was also won, despite being held during the early stages of block main leave and requiring a long journey to the venue at Kings Lynn.

Encouraging signs had been evident in the earlier four matches at Ilford, Reading (twice) and Portsmouth (Mountbatten Centre) where mid-placed finishes exceeded results at similar stages in previous seasons.

LS Andy Dawkins (Neptune) was a vital points scorer in all throwing events through the season.

Team spirit was also vital to cover gaps in the pursuit of position deciding team points – thus a number of athletes made their debuts in non-specialist events of which the 3,000m steeplechase remains the least favourite.

Team strength benefited from increased numbers compared to previous years, although in earlier matches abilities were stretched in sprints and middle-distance events through absences and injuries.

Competition in the Southern League provides the foundation for competition and development for a wide range of athletes. A top-five finish in 2008 would see promotion to Division 1, but the team performance will again depend on availability of athletes.

Ageless Garry is king of the world

THE great Hanseatic port of Hamburg played host to the triathlon age group World Championship with the Senior Service represented by five endurance athletes.

Cpl Garry Gerrard and PO Billy Holman raced in the 40-44 category, Sgt Steve Lewis in the 30-34 age group, Maj Charlie Pennington in the 25-29 category and LMA Mhairi Muir in the 20-24 section; each racer had qualified as part of the Great Britain squad through a number of different events held earlier in the season.

Most of the athletes arrived in Hamburg three days ahead of the race, giving them plenty of time to view the bike course and practise their swimming, writes Maj Pennington.

Various sessions were organised by the GB team and whilst it was a good idea to tour the course with someone who knew it, these 'touring' sessions could involve groups of 50 riders; it was actually wiser to ride with a few friends elsewhere.

The roads were generally closed off but you had to be careful to check that you were not riding in another race; we managed to get round at various times including at least one puncture (in my case) which then took the rest of the day to find a replacement. Note to self – bring a spare next time.

After the various practice sessions, either on the bike or in the water (which turned out to be almost opaque) we were ready to race and nerves started to kick in, making the wait unbearable.

The hardest part of the build-up was finding a restaurant with space the night before as all the restaurants were packed with the extra 2,000 triathletes who had descended upon the city.

Sunday morning came around quickly, mainly due to the relatively obscene hour the various waves (or age groups) started.

The course was generally regarded as fast due to the flat and easy bike course but the transition area made up for that – the run from the water exit to the transition area was at least 500m and in some cases longer.

This was navigated twice – once on the way into the first transition (swim to bike) and then again at the second transition (bike to run) so overall times were not as fast as anticipated.

Regardless, there were some fast times and plenty of slower ones too. I certainly struggled to sight correctly during the swim and added an extra leg to one of the turning markers which led to a slow swim from which I struggled to try and make a regain.

It was not to be and I finished in a lower position (28th) than I had hoped for, slightly disappointed but happy to have participated.

The other RN team members fared similarly with the notable exception of Cpl Garry Gerrard. (more about him in a moment).

LMA Muir came 28th in her group, PO Holman finished 55th



● Crowds applaud Maj Charlie Pennington as he pounds the streets of Hamburg during the World Triathlon Championships

and Sgt Lewis 63rd, both with good, solid performances.

Cpl Garry Gerrard managed to make good use of his experience from last year in Lausanne, where he injured a leg muscle during the run (which he was leading).

This year was a different story and he consolidated a good swim with a characteristically rapid bike ride, followed up by his usual fast run. He was able to take and then hold the lead on the run to finish 20 seconds ahead of the next finisher (another GB athlete) and be crowned world champion in the 40-44 age group at last. Not bad for an old man...

With the race over we were able to watch the elite men in the afternoon give us all a lesson on how to complete a triathlon.

Admittedly their course was different and the rules were slightly different during the bike leg but the pace was awesome to behold.

It certainly showed that there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Garry went to collect his medal during the ceremony and then it was back to discussions on the next year's season and race calendar. Already many were eyeing up the World Championships in Vancouver for 2008 and the Gold Coast, Australia, in 2009.

The RN once again proved that anything is possible with a little hard work and determination. The five members of the RN team left Hamburg with a smile, safe in the knowledge that they had done

their very best on the day but also thinking about how they could improve for the next one.

Triathlon is a growing sport within the UK and it is one where the Navy has a good pedigree. More details at www.rnmtri.co.uk

■ THE hopes of the RN – and the UK – in the Ironman World Championships (the ultimate triathlon) rest on the shoulders of WO1 Martin Smith this month.

The senior race, a reservist based at RNAS Yeovilton, competes with around 1,600 athletes from across the globe in Hawaii; all racers have previously made the grade in national ironman championships.

Martin will be racing in the over 50s category after qualifying in the UK championships in Sherborne (he won the British event two years ago in the 45-49 section).

The ironman comprises a 2.4-mile swim, then a 112-mile cycle ride through the Hawaiian countryside, athletes clamber off their bikes for a marathon.

The fastest ironmen will cross the finish line in around eight hours; Martin hopes to post a time around the 11-hour mark.

The only stumbling block presently is financial; the trip to Hawaii to represent the nation will cost £1,500 and because he's not a full-time reservist, the senior rating doesn't qualify for sports lottery cash.

Anyone who fancies sponsoring his bid for glory can contact him at martinsmith@yeovilton.mod.uk

Go ahead, make my clay...

THE Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (perhaps better known as SSAFA Forces Help) and three other charities will benefit from the £330 raised during a clay pigeon shoot hosted by the Portsmouth Area Clay Pigeon Club (PACPC) at Tipner ranges for the Mayor of Fareham's Charity Appeal.

Cllr Katrina Trott, Mayor of Fareham, presented the challenge trophy to Mark Bottrell, who scored 20 out of a possible 25 clays during the competition phase of the event.

Twenty novice shoots took part in the event which comprised two phases: a training stage of 25 clays with tuition and mentoring from club members, followed by a competition phase of a further 25 clays.

The Portsmouth Area Clay Pigeon Club was formed when HMS Daedalus' gun club combined with HMS Nelson's club.

Its aim is to promote the sport of clay pigeon shooting with serving and former members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilian staff in the Portsmouth area, and a limited number of local civilians.

It holds shoots regularly: on the second and fourth Sundays of each month on the clay pigeon range on land to the north side of the main ranges at Tipner.

Further information about the club can be obtained from the secretary, David Simmonds, at 01903 723472 or at secrnpacpc@aol.com



Shooters eye up 2008

2007 has proved a great success for all the Command teams in combat shooting, with many newcomers enjoying the welcoming, fun and professional atmosphere which is the RNRM CENSTAM Competition.

To enter a ship's team in the 2008 area Skill-at-Arms Competition, volunteer for attendance in support of a Command Team, or if you are looking to improve your combat shooting skills, log on to the RNRM Rifle Association website at www.rnmra.org, or e-mail Lt 'Dickie' Byrd, the association's CCO at corporate@RNRMRA.org.

Locost Sean powers to victory

THE 750MC Locost Championship visited the home of British motorsport with LET(WE) Sean Graham flying the RN flag, writes PO 'Dutchy' Holland, HMS Excellent.

Sean (Fleet HQ) got off to a bad start in qualifying having to push HMS Sultan's Locost (it's cheap to build, hence the name of the sport) car back to the Silverstone pits after three laps due to a broken radiator hose, putting him well down the grid on row 19 (position 38 out of 40) with a registered time of 1m 39s.

Thankfully, he managed to fix the hose before the start of the race.

At the start, the leading hand made up six places straight away thanks to

lots of practice at sprint racing, and was progressing through the field (pictured, right) when an accident occurred on lap three and caused the red flag to be brought out, stopping the race.

Once the obstruction had been cleared the drivers re-started in the positions they held before the red flag.

The resumed session lasted five minutes plus one lap and saw Sean progress through the field to 25th by the end of the session, setting his fastest lap of 1m 20s.

The accident meant just five of the planned 13 laps could be completed, leaving Sean slightly disappointed that he'd not been able to claw his way further up the field.

After hurtling around the hallowed Silverstone tarmac, Sean took the Sultan Locost to Mallory Park to compete against the RAF, who organise their own races at many venues around the country.

A very wet and windy race allowed the low-powered Locost (65BHP) to hold its own against more exotic machinery such as a Jaguar D-Type replica, a BMW 1502, a Renault Megane Dutch Touring Car and a V8 Westfield.

On completion of the 12-lap race, Sean was presented with an engraved glass trophy for a well-deserved first place.

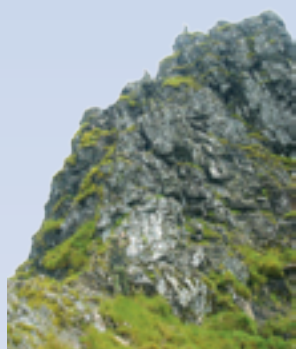
More details on four-wheeled motor racing in the RN at www.rnac.org.uk



Next month



Kings of the wild frontier, Part I – tackling the Himalayas



Kings of the wild frontier, Part II – 42 Cdo scale Scotland's peaks



No longer an Enigma? Inside the world of naval intelligence

Plus

Le jump jet – France's flagship hosts Harrier

● Lord of leaping... POPT Neal Edwards powers his way to victory in the 400m hurdles

Pictures: SAC Ben Tritta



Holding on to the balance of power

THE Navy's athletics teams enjoyed a summer of success as they continued to make steady progress both as teams and individuals, writes WO1 Paul Winton, team manager.

This year's Inter-Services competitions were hosted by DCAE Cosford, where the Royal Navy women pushed the hosts close for runners-up position, just losing out by six points.

This successful team performance was largely due to the relatively high level of availability of athletes – despite the constraints placed by operational and other Service commitments. A number of enthusiastic athletes also burst on to the scene.

Nine medals won by the women represents the best return for many years.

Leading the way was anaesthetist Surg Lt Cdr Julie 'Doc' Robin (RCDM Birmingham) – pictured, right – who left the other competitors breathless to win the discus, ably backed up by Mid Caroline Oakes (Sultan) who took silver.

The 800m also delivered two medals with LPT Julie Stroud (Raleigh) finishing very strongly to overhaul perennial medallist Lt Linda Lawrence (PJHQ), as they finished 2nd and 3rd respectively to a current GB international.

A strong team spirit has long been evident in our teams, typified by S/Lt Ellie Berry (BRNC) as she won silver in the 400m hurdles with Musn Holly Allender (RMSM) just holding on to the bronze.

Ellie also took part in the 1,500m and 5,000m and 4x400m relay; her just reward

was to win a medal in a non-specialist event. Medals do not come easily at Inter-Services championships.

Musn Kiri Wedlock (RMSM) finished second in the 1,500m – beaten only by the GB international – in a determined performance that benefited from her commitment to a regular and structured training programme through the season.

Elsewhere on the track bronze medals were won by LOGS Shely Prescott (HMS Manchester) over 100m for the second year running and impressive debutant LOGS Melissa Cupid (RNAS Yeovilton) over 200m.

Many of the above medallists also scored well in other events, beating athletes from the other two Services in the minor placings.

However, by far the loudest cheers of the day were heard for OM Michelle Pinion (HMS Northumberland) in the high jump.

On the way to equalling her personal best in this early event, she thrice achieved final attempt clearances that set a positive and competitive tone for the remainder of the team.

Michelle's passion for athletics, combined with her competitive nature, could see her do well at Inter-Services heptathlon championships in future years.

The standard of performance at the men's Inter-Services is very high, with many internationals and some Olympic athletes available to the other two Services, but the Royal Navy always hold the balance of power.

Not for the first time, men's team captain POPT Neal Edwards (JFC Naples), led by example on and off the track; in the

opening track event, the 400m hurdles, his commitment and determination gave him the vital edge to win in a season's best time, just holding off his two closest competitors.

Mne Mike Wilshire (42 Cdo) is a man who likes to run a personal best every time he steps on the track; he has often been successful in this challenging pursuit.

An early season foot injury had disrupted his training regime, but he still managed a personal best performance, inside 1m 56s, to win silver in the 800m after just six weeks' training.

True to form Mike had also improved his 1,500m personal best at the previous meeting; he has real potential to be the best Royal Navy middle distance runner for many years.

MEA Gary Petersen (Sultan) was just about the most improved athlete through the season, rewarded with a bronze in the very competitive 400m.

OM Mark Holvey (HMS Vengeance) finished third in the high jump, one place lower than the previous year, a good result considering he had only recently returned from a spell at sea.

The other men's medals were both won by the highest nationally-ranked athlete – LS Andy Dawkins (Neptune) who won bronze in the hammer and shot putt, narrowly missing a unique treble with his fourth place in the discus.

'Man mountain' Andy is dedicated to a strict training regime and has edged closer towards higher level representative selection

this year, notably in the shot where he has thrown close to 16m, but alas he was not quite able to repeat his Inter-Services win of the previous year.



LOGS Cornelius Delpesche (RNAS Yeovilton) has developed a degree of consistency over the past four years, albeit finishing fourth in each of those 100m... perhaps a medal next year. Royal Navy teams continue to be an eclectic mix of athletes. Eight in number were born and

Continued on page 43



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Hospital ships in the South Atlantic



● HMHS Hydra (left) and HMHS Uganda undertake a replenishment at sea with RFA tanker Olmeda in early June 1982

THE PYRAMIDS, camel rides – the very essence of Egypt, and at the heart of the philosophy of educational cruises.

Nothing compares to being there to swamp the senses in a new and different culture, stamping strong impressions on the memory.

However, more than 1,000 tourists, the vast majority British schoolchildren and their teachers, were glad to be heading back to the comfort of their ship after a long day of heat and dust.

As they climbed from their hot coaches, events thousands of miles away were conspiring to curtail their cruise, and their next port of call was not to be the Turkish city of Antalya, but Naples in Italy.

On arrival, the passengers were cleared in an hour, and later that day the ship sailed west for Gibraltar, with workmen already aboard to begin effecting a remarkable transformation in the 30-year-old steamship.

On April 16, 1982, she entered Gibraltar as the popular educational cruise ship SS Uganda, sporting the white hull and black funnel with two white bands of her original owners, the British India Steam Navigation Company (BI).

Three days later she left Number 2 Dry Dock as Her Majesty's Hospital Ship Uganda, red crosses proclaiming her rights and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention, and her destination was the South Atlantic.

Uganda had been launched on the Clyde in January 1952, not long before another Clyde-built ship which was designed to act as a Royal Navy hospital ship if the need arose.

As it happened, when that need did arise, the younger ship – HM Yacht Britannia – was judged to be too small for the job.

In any case, Britannia burned an uncommon type of fuel oil which would have led to logistical complications, and Uganda had been designed to cope with all weather conditions on her original UK to East Africa passenger/cargo runs, so would certainly manage the worst of the South Atlantic.

So in the days following the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands on April 2 1982, as Operation Corporate cranked into gear, it was the Uganda, now part of the P&O fleet, which was

requisitioned by the Government.

Dockyard workers in Gibraltar pulled out all the stops to kick-start the conversion process, made easier by the dormitory-style accommodation on board.

Hundreds of men swarmed on her as soon as Uganda arrived, and the most obvious sign of change was the fitting of a 40-ton helicopter flight deck and link ramp.

Uganda's new paint job presented problems – the Rock was scoured for reserves of red paint to complete the crosses when official supplies ran out.

But there was a great deal of work inside which was not so obvious; decks were cut for new access points, pipes routed to allow replenishments at sea, and major pieces of medical equipment, shipped out from Portsmouth by sea, were installed.

One aspect which caused concern was the supply of fresh water needed by a hospital – Uganda could carry well over 2,000 tons of water, but that would come nowhere near the amount needed.

The solution? Fit her out with desalination plants – but just to make it more interesting, the machinery would have to be delivered to her and fitted at sea.

Naval Party 1830, the surgical support teams earmarked to meet every medical eventuality in a war, was flown out by Hercules the day before the ship reached Gibraltar.

Senior Naval Officer was Cdr Andrew Gough, who brought communicators and flight deck crew with him, while Surg Capt Andrew Rintoul, the Medical Officer in Charge, had the task of creating a floating hospital.

The students' common room in Uganda became the main ward, the Verandah housed the operating theatre suite, the shop became an X-ray department (film developing was done in the hair salon), the cocktail bar turned into a pathology laboratory (with drinks cabinets proving ideal blood storage space), while the intensive therapy unit was built in the Smoking Room.

Also joining in Gib were almost two dozen young Royal Marines bandsmen from Portsmouth, who not only carried out the vital tasks of medical orderlies and stretcher bearers, but also provided music to support morale.

Just 65 hours were needed to transform Uganda, and with stores in place she sailed officially as an

FALKLANDS 25

HMHS, unofficially as a NOSH – Naval Ocean-going Surgical Hospital.

Among the other components of the Task Force converging on the Falklands were fellow BI Line veterans – the Knights of the Round Table class, including Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram, had been managed by the shipping line when they were first built for the Army in the 1960s.

On the voyage south the tempo of preparatory work continued unabated, with the first replenishment at sea (RAS) carried out within hours of her departure and a helicopter testing

the new 'flight deck'.

Stores were unpacked and shortfalls made good by ordering items from the UK, to be picked up at Ascension Island. Lectures on casualty treatment were attended by both RN and P&O staff, keen to help where they could.

The ship's first medical emergency involved her captain, Brian Biddick, a BI Line veteran, who was taken seriously ill shortly after sailing.

An emergency operation was carried out in the ship's own sick bay, then Uganda diverted to Sierra Leone to allow him to be airlifted back to the UK.

Less than three weeks later – on the day Uganda received her first casualties in the Falklands – the crew was told that he had died.

Despite the hard work, there were advantages to sailing in a converted liner; the ship's pools proved popular as the weather became warmer.

Uganda arrived off Ascension on April 28, where she topped up supplies, and continued south again on May 1, the mood quickly turning more sombre as the days following departure brought news of the sinking of the General Belgrano and HMS Sheffield.

The latter prompted Uganda to steam at her best speed to the Falklands, some 1,000 miles distant, and staff on board prepared an intensive care burns unit in the liner's hot, humid sick bay.

On arrival in the South Atlantic the ship was pitched straight into the maelstrom.

She received her first patients on May 12, from HMS Sheffield.

She was soon operating just off the coast, as original plans to remain far outside the 200-

mile Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) were quickly abandoned, partly because the dangers of transferring casualties from ship to ship in rough seas were judged too great.

Uganda subsequently spent a considerable amount of her time close to the life-and-death struggles of San Carlos Water.

Within days of arrival Uganda was given authority to co-ordinate the movement of all seven hospital ships, both British and Argentinian.

Converted RN survey ships Hecla, Herald and Hydra acted as seaborne 'ambulances' while the Argentinians deployed the Bahia Paraíso, Almirante Irizar and the Puerto Deseado.

Uganda also hosted a party of humanitarian officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

For many on board Uganda, receiving the Sheffield victims on board – they had waited patiently in HMS Hermes' sick bay for a week – was their first sight of seriously-burned flesh.

📖 (Continued on page 11)

● QARNNS nurses on board SS Uganda



The Falklands lifeliner

■ (Continued from page I)

The grotesque blistering swelling, and the unpleasant smell, would become all too familiar in the following weeks.

Over a period of two months Uganda received 730 casualties, and 504 operations were carried out in her operating theatres.

More than 120 patients were burns victims, and the liberal use of Flamazine cream as a first line of treatment, as an anti-bacterial barrier and for pain relief, was then a pioneering technique but is now widely-recognised as the basis for primary treatment of burns.

At times, such as the bombing of the landing ships at Fitzroy, two or three helicopters would queue to use Uganda's makeshift landing pad – the ship handled over 1,000 landings, 20 at night, without incident, a tribute to the skill of the pilots and to Uganda's flight deck crew.

On many occasions conditions were enough to test the very best medical skills.

A Force Ten gale and heavy seas could strike the ship with little warning – on May 15 a roll of 18 degrees to port and starboard was recorded, and despite Capt Jeff Clark's best efforts, seasickness recurred.

The Geneva Convention requires that hospital ships remain illuminated at night, and with spotlights picking out her red crosses Uganda would have made a useful navigation mark for attacking aircraft.

So when she was required to move in close to the combat zone – her log records that she was in Grantham Sound, close to San Carlos Water, on 12 days during the conflict – she usually sailed back out at nightfall to a designated “red cross box” some 12 miles off Cape Dolphin, where the ship was kept bow or stern-on to the seas to reduce rolling and allow surgical operations and medical procedures to continue



round the clock.

Uganda's new desalination plants, nicknamed Kariba and Niagara, were transferred in pieces by helicopter from HMS Intrepid on May 18, and were successfully assembled without instructions, producing up to 60 tonnes of fresh water each day.

Otherwise, as medical staff dealt with patients, the ship's crew had the usual round of RASes, stores and personnel transfers and exercises, made that much harder by violent weather conditions.

Around 150 of Uganda's patients were Argentinians, injured and captured by British forces, and when they were stabilised they were transferred to the Bahia Paraíso, which was frequently in company with Uganda.

Relationships between medical teams from both sides were cordial; on one occasion, with X-ray film stock running short aboard Uganda, a fresh supply was sent from the Bahia Paraíso.

Patients flown in from all over the combat zone, including field hospitals at Ajax Bay, Teal Inlet and Fitzroy, entered the system rapidly – from helicopter touchdown to hospital via access ramp and triage could be as short as three minutes – but with numbers rising after major attacks there were occasions when the floating hospital was stretched to the limit.

Staff transfers from other units helped relieve the strain, while stabilised and treated patients were regularly offloaded to one of the ambulance ships for passage to South America (*see page IV*).

And the P&O crew, who had volunteered to go to the Falklands, helped medical staff whenever they



● Troopship Uganda pictured at first light in the English Channel on August 9 1982 as she approaches Southampton on her return from the Falklands War

Uganda reunion

A HOSPITAL Ship Uganda reunion is to be held on board P&O liner Aurora.

The event, open to all who served, sailed, or were medically treated on board Uganda during the Falklands War, will be held at Southampton on April 20.

Among those eligible are members of the RN, QARNNS, P&O, RN Medical and Technical teams, RM stretcher bearers and musicians, 1/7th Gurkhas and 16th Field Ambulance RAMC. Husbands, wives and partners are also welcome.

Organisers are seeking as many former patients as possible, and disabled parking facilities will be available nearby.

The cost is £15.50 each, which includes coffee, lunch and drinks, and a small admin charge. Rig will be smart casual, and the event runs from 10.30am to 2pm.

Admission is by ticket only; application forms from Nicci Pugh (QARNNS) on n_pugh@btinternet.com or Derek Houghton (P&O), d.houghton50@ntlworld.com

Closing date for applications is February 22 2008.

On the preceding day Surg Cdr Peter Bull, the ship's consultant anaesthetist, will give a slide show of the voyage at the Premier Travel Inn Southampton North.

The informal show starts at 6pm, and other photos will be welcomed.

A buffet supper will be provided, with contributions to the South Atlantic Medal Association (SAMA).

Accommodation is available for both nights at £50 per room per night; contact the hotel direct on 08701 977233.

■ 25th Anniversary greetings cards, designed by Nicci Pugh and featuring Uganda as a hospital ship, are being sold to support SAMA 82. They have been printed with a Christmas message or as blank cards.

To buy the cards, in packs of ten at £6 per pack (three packs for £15) including UK P&P, see website www.sama82.org



● HMHS Uganda at Port William in the Falklands, shortly after the Argentinian surrender. This photograph, from the Imperial War Museum in London, features in a special exhibition marking the 25th anniversary of the conflict. The exhibition, which runs until January 6, tells the story of the Falklands War through unique accounts by the people involved and displays of previously-unseen memorabilia from both British and Argentinian combatants and Falkland Islands residents. A website – www.iwm.org.uk/Falklands – complements the exhibition

deep-water harbour, and within days parties from the ship started to make brief visits ashore.

For many it was the first time they had set foot on land since Gibraltar, ten weeks before.

Uganda undertook a more familiar role in early July, making a “Round Falklands Cruise”, although midwinter conditions meant deck games and lounging by the pools were not on the agenda – the ship experienced everything from gales to heavy snow.

Even at this point there were still patients being treated on board.

Back at Stanley a party was held for almost 100 children, with fancy dress, food and a film show, and some of the youngsters were forced to spend a night aboard as the wind whipped up.

But she had one final contribution as a hospital ship, shortly after she had been de-registered by the Red Cross, when eight victims of an accident at Stanley Airfield were flown aboard for urgent treatment.

She then underwent another transformation. Red crosses were painted out and the funnel painted buff as she became HM Troopship Uganda to take home more than 700 Gurkhas and members of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

As she steamed out of Port William on July 17, inevitably into the teeth of a gale, the hospital was gradually dismantled.

Uganda was one of the last ships of the original Task Force to return to the UK, so the warmth of the

welcome back to Southampton on August 9 was a surprise to many.

As she headed up Southampton Water, a lone Gurkha playing the bagpipes high on the mast, she was surrounded by yachts and small craft.

Acknowledged by both the Canberra and the QE2, Uganda was nudged alongside to a hero's welcome by a huge crowd.

But that was not the end of her links with the South Atlantic.

She was converted back for use as a schools cruise liner during an extensive refit on the Tyne, and resumed her former career.

On September 25 she sailed for the Med on her first post-war schools cruise, but within two months P&O announced she would be taken off the programme to provide a troopship shuttle between Ascension and the Falklands until a new runway at Mount Pleasant was ready.

As before, passengers were disembarked – this time as planned, in Malta on January 2 1983 – and workmen took their place to start her conversion for military use as she set sail.

Her refit was carried out in Southampton and she headed back for the Falklands on January 14.

Each round trip took almost a month, and again the South Atlantic gave her a fearful battering.

Windows were regularly smashed by the sea – some were eventually

plated over with steel – and without any opportunity to go alongside for maintenance, she was soon covered in streaks of rust.

She was refitted again at the end of 1983 at Falmouth, and returned to the South Atlantic run for one final spell.

She left Port William for the last time on April 4 1985, and the following month the ‘airbridge’, operated by wide-body airliners, was opened to Mount Pleasant.

Uganda reached Falmouth on April 25 after more than 500 days at sea without going alongside, and there she remained for over a year, quietly rotting on the River Fal as the newly-formed SS Uganda Society attempted to save her from the scrapyard.

But it was all in vain, and on May 20 1986 Uganda – renamed Triton for her last voyage, and in a sorry state of repair – was tugged out of Coombe Creek.

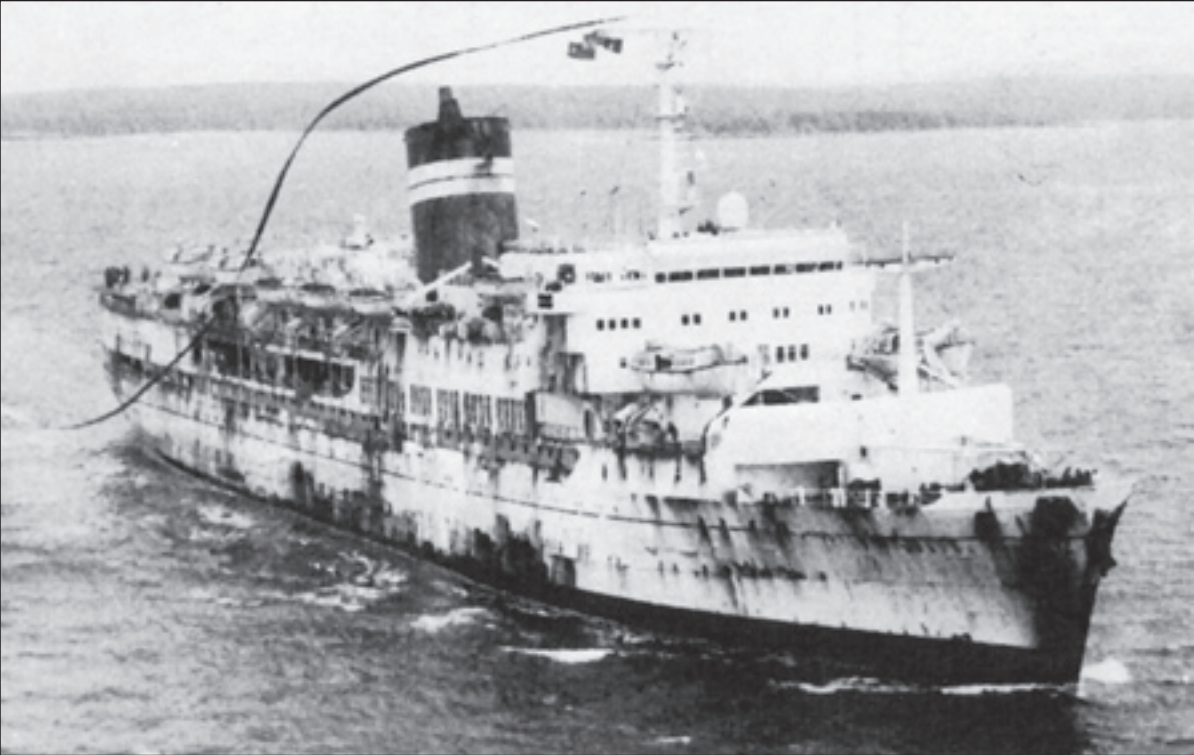
Her condition deteriorated as she headed slowly towards Taiwan, with leaky seals and failing generators, but she arrived off Kaohsiung on July 15.

There she lay for a further month, awaiting a berth at the breaker's yard, before the weather took a hand.

Towards the end of August Typhoon Wayne drove her ashore near the harbour mouth, where she was slowly broken up by the sea over the following decade.

Her memory is kept alive by the SS Uganda Trust – see website www.ssuganda.co.uk

Uganda: The story of a very special ship was published in 1998 by the SS Uganda Trust, a charity which developed from the SS Uganda Society's attempt to preserve the liner. Today the Trust continues the sponsorship and maritime heritage activities started by the Society, including support of educational and recreational facilities for children and young people. The ISBN number of the book, which provided much detail for the above article, is 0 9531082 0 1; see website www.ssuganda.co.uk



● A weather-beaten Uganda leaving the Falklands in June 1985, flying a paying-off pennant



● (Above) Nicci Pugh at work in an operating theatre on board Uganda in the South Atlantic

● (Below) QARNNS nurses – with their mascots – set off from RN Hospital Haslar in May 1982, bound for Gibraltar to join HMHS Uganda before she sailed south to the Falklands



‘We felt we had really gone to war’

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The ship’s regular withdrawals to the “red cross box”, 12 miles off Cape Dolphin, brought medical staff little respite, as there was little shelter from foul weather and high seas.

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‘Nothing so dreadful’ Passchendaele 1917

A MEETING IN WASHINGTON

THE FATAL DECISION

ONE BATTLE, MANY NAMES

At ten minutes past four on the last day of January 1917, Robert Lansing prepared to welcome a visitor. It was coming to the end of the working day in Washington, but Lansing’s guest would ensure the lights on the Capitol burned into the night.

Johann Heinrich Graf von Bernstorff removed his trademark bowler hat perched precariously on his head and his long flowing coat and rather limply offered Lansing his hand.

Bernstorff was renowned in the US capital as a *bon viveur*. He loved all the things a gentleman should love: women, cigars, golf, poker. He could hold court for hours on end and, atypically for a Prussian, he welcomed journalists with open arms. And as the German Ambassador to the United States, Johann Heinrich Graf von Bernstorff had a singular task: to keep the country out of the European conflagration.

But on this Wednesday afternoon Bernstorff knew his mission had failed. Gone was his customary smile. He glumly handed the US Secretary of State a note: within eight hours Germany’s vaunted *U-bootwaffe* would unleash a war without limits and restrictions against the world’s merchant trade. The United States would be permitted to send one passenger ship across the Atlantic to Falmouth each week – provided it was painted in red and white stripes and flew a huge red and white checkered flag from every mast.

The normally taciturn Lansing looked up from the note. “You know what the result will be.”

Bernstorff nodded. “I know it is very serious, very. I deeply regret that it is necessary.” The ambassador bowed and left.

Robert Lansing did not know it. Johann Heinrich Graf von Bernstorff did not know it. But the note the German official handed to the American would ensure that British sailors would be locked in a life and death struggle that autumn with the ‘Hun’ in Flanders, the low-lying poplar-studded terrain straddling northern France and Belgium, east of the historic cloth trading town of Ypres.

The Germans would call it *Ypern* or, more usually, *Flanderschlacht* – Flanders battle. The official historians of the Great War named it the Third Battle of Ypres. The world has come to know it by a single world: Passchendaele.

CHAINS REMOVED

TERROR ON THE OCEANS

THE U-BOAT PERIL

The road to Passchendaele began in the court of Kaiser Wilhelm II in the 300-room castle of Prince Hans von Pless near the great Silesian city of Breslau and the rather more modest Château Beaurepaire, 20 miles south of Boulogne, home to General Sir Douglas Haig. Both sought outright victory: the Kaiser on the high seas, Douglas Haig along the Channel coast.

Victory was something Wilhelm II had sought in the summer and autumn of 1914 as his armies smashed through neutral Belgium and Luxembourg into northern France, stalling on the Marne and in the flooded plains of Flanders. He had sought victory too at Verdun in 1916, again to no avail. The mighty dreadnoughts of his Hochseeflotte



● ‘The ground presented the most God-forsaken spectacle I had seen’... A shell crashes into the desolate moonscape east of Ypres, where a British tank has been abandoned in the mud

Picture: Naval Historical Branch

– High Seas Fleet – had failed to wrest command of the ocean from the Royal Navy at Jutland.

There was, perhaps, one last card to play. The *Unterseeboot*, the U-boat, that “damned un-English weapon” which struck fear into the heart of the enemy.

For two years, the U-boats had been on a leash, ordered to obey the very strictest rules of warfare. Unleashed they had brought Germany to the brink of war with the United States – most infamously they dispatched the liner *Lusitania* – until the shackles were put back in place.

Even on a leash, the German submarine was a formidable foe, condemning roughly 180 merchant ships to a watery grave each month – more than 300,000 tons of shipping every four weeks.

It was not enough. For all the sinkings, for all the deaths, for all the raw materials sent to the bottom of the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the North Sea, Britain was still in the war. Her merchant fleet had shrunk by barely one twentieth since the beginning of the war.

Unchaining the shackles, argued Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, Germany’s Chief of the Naval Staff, would ensure the destruction of 600,000 tons of shipping monthly and deal England – Germans rarely referred to Britain – a mortal blow.

“Terror will strike into seafarers, into the English people and neutrals, guaranteeing the success of the unrestricted U-boat war,” the admiral declared. “I expect success with certainty within five months at the latest. That success will suffice to make England bow to an acceptable peace.”

There were objections. Johann Heinrich Graf von Bernstorff opposed an all-out campaign. So too Germany’s chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg. U-boat warfare had almost made an enemy of the United States once before. Washington would not be so forgiving a second time. The hawks arrogantly dismissed the threat of war with America: not a single ‘doughboy’ would set foot on the European continent.

“They will not come because our U-boats will sink them,” declared Admiral Eduard von Capelle, the State Secretary of the Navy. “From a military viewpoint they mean nothing, nothing, and yet again nothing.”

The German *volk*, too, were in favour of an all out war against Britain’s lifeline; the Reich was being strangled by the Royal Navy’s blockade. Now the British would suffer likewise.

“There’s a sigh of relief among the entire German people,” Munich’s *Münchner Zeitung* commented.

“A single word comes out of everyone’s mouth: Finally!”

And so at midnight on January 31 1917, the chains were released. “We must attack ferociously, but we must also attack particularly quickly,” Hermann Bauer, the head of the *U-bootwaffe*, told his men. “So wage war with the greatest energy. No ship which can be sunk after this order should remain afloat.”

On the day the shackles were removed, one in four of the Kaiser’s front-line U-boats was under the command of the *Unterseebootsflotille Flandern* – the ‘Flanders Flotilla’ – based in the historic Belgian city of Bruges.

And Bruges was, in the words of American journalist Lowell Thomas, “the Flanders lair for the German under-sea corsairs – a particularly irksome threat to the Allies, a thorn in the side”, with canals connecting it with Ostend and Zeebrugge.

Unleashed, the Flanders Flotilla and the rest of the *U-bootwaffe* wrought the destruction their masters had hoped for.

“There are two things which are going to win or lose this war,” observed Admiral Sir David Beatty, the dashing, headstrong, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet.

“Our armies might advance a mile a day and slay the Hun in thousands, but the real crux lies in whether we blockade the enemy to his knees, or whether he does the same to us.”

In the spring of 1917, it was ‘the Hun’ in the ascendancy. The first month of the unrestricted campaign accounted for 291 merchant ships;

in March 355 were sunk; the toll reached its peak in April, 458 vessels lost. But the sinkings continued: in May 357; in June 352. Over five months, more than three million tons of shipping, half of them British fell victim to German submarines. One in four merchantmen setting sail for or from the British Isles would never return.

It could not go on like this. No nation, not even the world’s greatest seafaring nation, could withstand such crippling losses indefinitely.

“I must call attention to the great and to the growing menace of Germany’s piratical devices,” warned Lord Camarvon in a speech that bleak spring of 1917.

“It is nothing new in essence. It is a development, it is an advance along the road to complete barbarism. The peril is great.”

The peril was indeed great. Even before the U-boats began their concerted campaign, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Jellicoe had been worried. Britain had too few merchant ships to sustain her. Now, in the spring of 1917, Jellicoe cut a sepulchral figure in the corridors of the Admiralty.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, the grandest fleet indeed which the Empire had ever sent to sea, Jellicoe had been the only man who could “lose the war in an afternoon”. But now he was losing the war, slowly, inexorably.

“It is impossible for us to go on with the war if losses like this continue,” he confided in American admiral William Sims. “Is there no solution for the problem?” asked Sims. “Absolutely none that we can see now,” Jellicoe responded forlornly.

The admiral’s despondency reached its nadir in Downing Street on Wednesday June 20 1917 at the War Cabinet. The mood of ministers was already depressed. Public morale was sagging: raids by heavy German bombers, Gothas, were pounding the capital.

Gothas would not win the war, but that other ‘piratical device’ beloved by the foe, the submarine, might.

As the ministers discussed plans

for actions by the Army for 1917 and 1918, Jellicoe interjected.

“There is no good discussing plans for next spring – we cannot go on,” the admiral warned; if shipping losses continued at the same rate into the autumn, the Empire would be forced to sue for peace by November.

The news, observed the Commander-in-Chief of the Army Douglas Haig, “was a bombshell”.

Perhaps he did not intend to, or perhaps he did, but John Jellicoe had played into the hands of Douglas Haig.

SECOND FIDDLE

MUTINY IN FRANCE

THE FLANDERS OFFENSIVE

Throughout the winter and spring of 1917, Douglas Haig had played second fiddle to the French. The Scottish general lacked the flair of his Gallic counterpart Nivelle, whose charm, zeal, and erudition persuaded Allied leaders to unleash the French soldier against the Chemin des Dames, an imposing ridge north-west of Reims where he would reap “a splendid harvest of glory”.

The British role in Nivelle’s grand plan had been little more than a sideshow, a bloody sideshow at that – a diversionary attack at Arras. The Battle of Arras in April and May of 1917 had largely been a success; Nivelle’s offensive did not merely fail, it almost cost France the war.

Even before the offensive, morale in the French Army had been waning. In its wake, it collapsed.

The failure of Nivelle’s attack was the final straw for the *poilu*, the ordinary French soldier. He mutinied.

Between mid-April and mid-June 1917 54 divisions of the French Army were rocked by indiscipline. The *poilu* rolled through the streets of *la Patrie* crying: “*Vive la paix! Vive la Révolution!*” Above all, the Frenchman refused to attack. For the rest of 1917, the Tommy, not

Continued on page ii

THE WARRIOR OF 1917

JACK, NOT TOMMY

LIKE his comrades in the Army, the sailor-soldier of the Royal Naval Division wore the standard-issue khaki field jacket.

Indeed the uniform and kit of Jack was almost identical to Tommy.

The Lee Enfield rifle, plus bayonet, was his friend.

On his chest was a ‘small box’ respirator – gas mask – in a haversack. In the cold or wet he donned a leather jerkin.

He carried a mess tin, water bottle, a tool for digging trenches. And on his head he wore a ‘Brodie helmet’ – also known as the ‘Tommy helmet’ or ‘tin hat’ – with its distinctive wide brim to provide some protection against shrapnel.

Proud of their maritime roots, however, the men of the Royal Naval Division maintained the traditions of their seaborne comrades.

Officers wore the distinctive rings and curls on their sleeves, not in gold braid but usually in a lighter shade of khaki (they also wore the equivalent Army pips on their shoulders); ranks wore traditional badges on their sleeves, as well as their battalion badge and a colour flash signalling their company.

The customs of the division were distinctly naval: the White Ensign flew over its camps.

Officers relaxed in ward rooms, ranks in messes; all were fed from the galley, not the field kitchen; the wounded were treated in a sick bay, not the field hospital.

Army officers tried to rid the RND of its ‘peculiar’ customs.

“But so stubborn was the resisting power which all ranks developed in a perfectly obedient and respectful manner, and so high was their conduct in action, that after six months the essential character of the Division was unchanged,” wrote Churchill.



Andy Brady 2007



● *The ruins of the Cloth Hall at Ypres, passed by most soldiers heading up to the Flanders front*

Continued from page i
the *poilu*, would bear the burden of the war.

And that suited Douglas Haig. The general had long wished to push the British Expeditionary Force across Flanders between the historic cloth town of Ypres to the coast at Nieuport, sweeping through the vital railway junction of Roulers then on to Bruges.

It was a tantalising objective – and one which earned the wholehearted support of the Admiralty. Bruges-based U-boats accounted for one in every three merchant ships sunk in the spring of 1917.

“Zeebrugge is the barrel of the pistol and the submarines and destroyers based there are the bullets which daily strike their deadly blows at the heart of Britain’s seapower,” wrote Maurice Hankey, secretary of the War Cabinet.

Jellicoe would not risk a bombardment by the leviathans of the Grand Fleet, while the long-range guns of the Navy’s monitors might damage ships in harbour and a few dock installations, but could never prevent the beasts leaving their lair.

There was only one solution: a ground assault.

Douglas Haig planned a three-stage offensive to roll-up the Belgian coast in the summer and autumn of 1917. The Royal Navy would play its part, too, with an amphibious landing behind the German lines east of Nieuport.

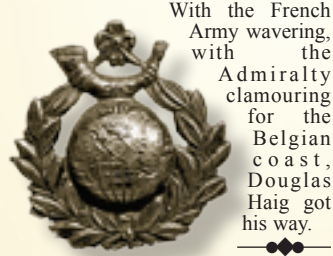
The general was convinced his great plan would deliver, if not outright victory, then a notable success. But then again, even a limited success would “give very useful results – apart from the effect on the German Army and nation of another defeat.

“The German Army has already lost much of that moral force without which physical power, even in its most terrible form, is but an idle show.”

He had no intention, Haig told the politicians, “of entering into a tremendous offensive involving heavy losses” and he would only launch his armies if there was “a reasonable chance of success.”

The general summed up his position in a memorandum for the War Cabinet.

“The time and place to choose are now beyond dispute. We have gone a long way already towards success. Victory may be nearer than is generally realised.”



War had come to the trading town of Ypres in the dying days of October 1914 – and never left.

In the ‘race to the sea’, as friend and foe tried to outflank each other and force victory, the German, British and French armies locked horns to the east of Ypres. No-one forced a way through. The front solidified, running to the south, east and north of the town.

It wasn’t just that Ypres – leper to the Flemings, ‘Wipers’ to the Tommy – was surrounded on three sides by the Germans. The ‘Hun’ looked down upon Ypres from a ridge from the hamlets of Staden and Passchendaele to the northeast, through the village of Gheluvelt to the east and on to Messines, half a dozen miles to the south of the town.

‘Ridge’ is perhaps a grandiose name for it. Never was the ‘ridge’ more than 150ft above the low-lying Flanders terrain; at Passchendaele it was a mere 70ft higher than Ypres, its slope barely noticeable. Yet from this elevation, the German Army dominated the salient.

The ‘ridge’ was not the only key feature of this land. Flanders is peppered with drainage ditches – *beeks* in Flemish – and covered with soil which is slow to drain, sitting upon an almost impervious foundation of clay. The terrain of Flanders troubled John Charteris, Haig’s intelligence chief. Preparations for the Flanders offensive were as thorough as any the British Army had made. Charteris’ “one fear” was the weather. Rain quickly swelled the *beeks* and turned the ground into a quagmire. “It is impossible to forecast the result,” the intelligence officer wrote on the eve of battle. “The only thing that is certain is a big casualty list.”

John Charteris was right to fear for the Flanders weather. And he was right about the casualty list, too.

FEW GAINS

MUD AND YET MORE MUD

PRAISE FROM PM

Douglas Haig’s great offensive promised considerably more than it delivered. It had rained heavily on the days before the attack was finally unleashed on July 31. It continued to rain after the attack was unleashed.

Weather was, of course, not the only foe. ‘Fritz’ was waiting for Tommy. There had been no hiding the preparations for the offensive. And so there would no swift breakthrough, no smashing through to Bruges. Just four days into the Third Battle of Ypres, Douglas Haig called off the first stage of his offensive. But Third



Ypres did not end in the first week of August 1917. It would drag on for another 100 days.

The British Army, bolstered by its Canadian and Australian allies, bludgeoned its way across Flanders, advancing no more than four miles in two months of battle. By the beginning of October 1917, the line at its furthest point from Ypres stood just short of a ridge which bore the name of a village which in turn would give the entire battle its name, Passchendaele.

Passchendaele had never been an objective *per se* – it had been one of Douglas Haig’s objectives on the road to Bruges. But Bruges was now a pipe dream. Passchendaele was tangible and, Douglas Haig reasoned, a key point in the German defences around Ypres. It *had* to be taken.

The battle for Passchendaele began with the battle for Poelcapelle, another nondescript Flemish village a couple of miles to the northwest.

The signs were ominous. After a dry September, October had been dogged by downpours. With good weather, intelligence officer John Charteris reasoned, the Germans might yet be driven from the Belgian coast.

But October 9 was a wet day. It allowed only a half success at Poelcappelle. And half successes in Flanders were almost as disappointing as outright failures. “It was not the enemy but mud that prevented us doing better,” the brigadier fumed.

The failure of October 9 left the normally upbeat Charteris as dejected as the men in the trenches.

“When one knows that the great purpose one has been working for has escaped, somehow one sees and thinks of nothing but the awfulness of it all,” he confided.

The rain persisted and so did Douglas Haig. On October 12, he threw three corps at Passchendaele and its environs. “I expect we will have Passchendaele village today all right,” he wrote to his wife.

The assault miscarried almost along the entire line; the men became, one infantry officer lamented, “quite literally stuck in the mud”. The men filtered back after the battle with looks of “indescribable horror in their pale and unshaven faces”. *Can this battle be justified*, the lieutenant asked himself. “I’m sure that the reply from all the troops engaged in it would be a most resounding ‘No!’”

But Douglaish Haig would not desist. He was determined to press on. “It was simply the mud which defeated us,” Haig told journalists. “The men did splendidly. But the Flanders mud is not a new invention. It has a name in history – it has defeated other armies before this one.”

Haig was convinced his was the right course. Never bend, never waver from it. There was only way to defeat Germany – by defeating her Army in the only theatre of war which counted, the Western Front. The battle in Flanders, he assured the Cabinet, “continues to make good progress”. The Tommy was “elated and confident”; his foe “considerably shaken” and “depressed”. The battle had to be continued. “Everything goes to show that the power of endurance of Germany and her allies is so severely strained that the mere fact of our ability and evident determination to maintain the struggle to the end may suffice to turn the scale at any moment.”

David Lloyd George was not convinced. He had never been in favour of Haig’s offensive and two months of battle had

compounded the British premier’s grave misgivings about the course and conduct of the campaign in Flanders.

“It was not that he could not face losses, but he insisted that the losses must not be incurred without commensurate results,” noted Maurice Hankey, a former Royal Marine. “A man took 21 years to make, and human life was very precious.”

Indeed, anything but continuing the offensive in Flanders seemed preferable to Lloyd George: taking over some of the French front line, sending divisions to Italy, perhaps to the Middle East too to rout the Turks and seize Jerusalem.

“It is a hard war – not because of the Boche but because of these people here,” fumed General William ‘Wully’ Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who threatened to resign as the row between soldiers and politicians reached its climax.

The soldiers won. On October 16, Douglas Haig was handed a telegram from David Lloyd George, a telegram as surprising as it was gushing:

The War Cabinet desire to congratulate you and the troops under your command upon the achievements of the British armies in Flanders in the great battle which has been raging since July 31.

Starting from positions in which every advantage rested with the enemy and hampered and delayed from time to time by most unfavourable weather, you and your men have nevertheless continuously driven the enemy back with such skill, courage and pertinacity as have commanded the grateful admiration of the peoples of the British Empire and filled the enemy with alarm.

The stage was set for the final act of the tragedy of Third Ypres.

ENTER THE 63rd

PREPARATIONS FOR BATTLE

The battle had largely passed the men of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division by. The sailor-soldiers – officer and man, they wore the insignia of the Senior Service, spoke like Jack, thought like Jack, yet their uniforms were khaki and their home was the Western Front – had spent the spring and summer of 1917 holding the line outside Arras.

The division had fought with distinction in Gallipoli, on the Somme and at Gavrelle, in the Arras salient. The gods of war now demanded it fight again.

In mid-September 1917, the sailors were hauled out of the trenches at Arras and sent north to the small French town of Herzelee, south-east of Dunkirk, before moving up to Ypres.

Herzelee offered few attractions, save *Le Lion Blanc* (White Lion) “a comfortable estaminet” with a likeable landlady, Lulu, and plenty of space for the men to lie down and rest.

Like the rest of Flanders in the autumn of 1917, the land about Herzelee was “a sea of mud”. The men trained nevertheless.

Out for his daily ride, Surg Lt Geoffrey Sparrow, an affable 30-year-old Devonian with a penchant for painting, stopped to watch company commander Capt Peter Ligertwood

brief his fellow Royal Marines.

In a few days, the Royals would go “over the top” once more. Ligertwood had already been wounded once and knew that in the battle to come, his men would quickly become disorientated in the Ypres mud.

He devised a simple plan: four sticks of wood with strips of red canvas nailed to them which the marines would carry across the battlefield like regimental colours of old. These makeshift banners would serve as rallying points – and they would rally the men.

Father Davey, the chaplain of the 2nd Royal Marines Light Infantry, stepped forward to bless these simple standards. “The men regarded them as sacred,” Geoffrey Sparrow observed.

Other preparations were equally meticulous. Scale models of the battlefield built with individual pillboxes and trenches laid out for the sailor-soldiers to study. Intelligence officers strode around the brigade headquarters brimming with confidence.

For Cdr Arthur Asquith, however, it was not enough. Too much time was spent laying roads, building duckboard paths over the Flanders mire. The men needed to train, train for battle. They needed at least two weeks of intensive, unbroken instruction.

With proper training, Arthur Asquith’s men could accomplish any task demanded of them. Without it, the officer could promise nothing.



● *‘As daring as anybody’... Cdr Arthur Asquith, Commanding officer, Hood Battalion*

A BORN LEADER

STEADY, HOOD

Arthur Asquith was the son of the former prime minister Henry Herbert – or simply ‘H H’ – Asquith, ousted by Lloyd George in December 1916.

But the 34-year-old never played upon his family connections. He owed his progress to bravery on the field of Mars, not patronage.

Just days after war broke out in August 1914, Arthur Melland Asquith was itching to quit his job working for an Anglo-Argentine firm in London and serve his country. Before August

was over, he had handed in his notice, explaining to his family that he could not “sit quietly by reading the papers.”

Within one month he was commissioned a temporary sub-lieutenant and within another he and the men of the Royal Naval

Division were locked in mortal combat with the ‘Hun’ at Antwerp.

The division was not a division in the true sense. It was a mish-mash, sailors without ships who had rifles thrust into their hands, led in many cases by officers who knew little or nothing of the modern battlefield.

However brave such men were, they could not save Antwerp. “It was like sending sheep to the shambles,” Asquith’s father acidly commented.

At least one man had stood out in the ‘shambles’: Arthur Asquith – “as daring as anybody,” wrote machine-gunner Joseph Murray. “There isn’t one of us who wouldn’t go through fire and water for him.”

The Admiralty evidently agreed, for by the spring of 1917 the now Cdr Arthur Asquith was in charge of one of the Royal Naval Division’s battalions, Hood – named like all its sister units for naval heroes.

The Steadies – a nickname they took from the Hood Battalion’s single-word motto – were weary. They had been at war for three years and they did not like what they saw of Flanders.

“There was mud to the right of us, mud to the left of us, with mud and slush as far as the eye could see,” recalled clerk Thomas MacMillan on the staff of 189th Brigade.

The brigade made its headquarters at Dirty Bucket Corner – so called for latrines which were grim even by Western Front standards.

The grim latrines paled, however, when compared with the Flanders landscape “marred in an abominable way by our own shells and by the enemy”.

The shelling was compounded by German Gothas – heavy bombers – spilling their loads by day or, more commonly, by night into the Flanders mud.

“I lay awake listening to the confusion which their bombing created,” wrote MacMillan.

“I could hear the tooting of motor horns, the sounds of drivers of limber wagons and the patter of their horses’ hoofs in their wild scamper to clear the Menin Road. Between bombs, shells and gas, this road must have been the most perilous highway in any of the theatres of war.”

As the RND moved up to the front line, so too its headquarters. 189th Brigade made for a German pillbox, Hubner Farm, captured earlier in the offensive.

Thomas MacMillan walked along the Menin Road, then stepped on to the duckboards to head for the farm.

“The ground presented the most God-forsaken spectacle I had seen,” he recalled.

Flanking the narrow walkway were “the day’s casualties, half-buried in the mud. Men and horses, half-submerged, eyed us with a glassy stare, and the brown water ran red with their blood.”

The ground had been turned to a mushy pulp by the German guns, and every shell hole was now a muddy pool; one was so large it consumed the remnants of one of the RND’s field batteries.

“If you stumbled, you would go in up to the waist – you just sank into the mud,” recalled Sgt Maj Richard Tobin of the Royal Marines Light Infantry.

“Literally every pool was full of decomposed bodies of humans and mules.”

Each time the front line inched forward through the mud, so behind it the network of duckboard walkways grew so that the



● **Druid D1 – a British Female Mk IV tank – knocked out near Poelcapelle; the wrecked tank could still be found in the same position 12 months later**

men could receive replacements, food, ammunition – “the artery upon which the life of a sustained action could depend”.

In the final days before the assault, keeping these arteries open was the vital task of the Royal Naval Division.

It was a relentless, often fruitless task, as one officer in Hawke Battalion recalled.

“Day after day we would find the track which the previous day’s work had left firm and ready to receive the planks ploughed up with shells, strewn with broken limbers, dead or foundered mules, and all the litter and debris of the hours of darkness.”

Each morning at Ypres began with ritual killing: putting an end to the misery of the wounded and drowning horses – sometimes as many as a dozen had to be put down.

It was, wrote Capt Frank Hurley, the official Australian photographer, “a wicked, agonising sight. Here and there lay dead, half-buried in the mud, horses and broken wagons, all cogently telling some tragedy and horror, but one is immune to all these and passes by as unperturbed as though they were just pieces of rock.”

YPRES APOCALYPSE

FLANDERNSCHLACHT

After nightfall on October 14, German cavalry officer Rudolf Binding stared across the battlefield. The gods were angry. A storm raged in the autumn sky, a wild yet mesmerizing thunderstorm. “The beasts of the Apocalypse seemed to be at grips, lashing at one another with hot and cold talons, with icy and glowing breath, with limbs of different shapes and sizes.”

Binding had been here in Flanders three years before when the German Army sought victory. Now he had returned. The landscape was changed. So too the ordinary soldier, the *landser* – the German equivalent of the redoubtable Tommy.

On the surface, the men were still determined, still hopeful of victory, still “doing his job in defending his country”. They enjoyed the dubious pleasures of Ostend and Bruges, drinking bad beer, smoking cigars and listening to scratchy gramophones.

But scratch beneath the surface and three years of war had taken their toll “inwardly and outwardly”. The *Pickelhaube*, the spiked helmet, had been replaced by the more practical *Stahlhelm* or ‘coal scuttle’ helmet. The soldier’s uniform was weather-beaten, worn, faded, crudely patched up.

In his haversack hanging from his belt was a piece of bacon, a slice of bread, *ersatz* – substitute – honey or lard, perhaps a postcard from home, ammunition and a pencil. His canteen was filled with barley coffee or brambleleaf tea – Germany had long since been starved of the real foods – mixed with ‘division’s hooch’, a rather evil liquor. Besides his rifle, the soldier’s constant companion

was his gasmask, slung over his shoulder, and a packet of cigarettes.

After four years of war he knew all the sights, sounds, smells of a modern battlefield.

His ears could hear the shells being fired, hear them howling through the air, hear them crashing into the Flanders mud. He could

distinguish small shells from the heavy caliber, *schwere Brocken* – ‘big dumplings’ – or *Koffer* – bags. His nose knew the smell of chlorine, the smell of powder, the smell of corpses.

He knew every weapon. The mortar. The field guns and heavy artillery. The flamethrower. The machine-gun. And, above all, the rifle and hand-grenade. Yet living and fighting in the Flanders mud, hauling guns, bringing up ammunition, water, rations, through the mire had exhausted him. Sickness was rife – as many as one in four men was suffering some form of illness, especially diarrhoea, in some divisions.

“There are no surprises any more for him,” wrote Werner Beumelburg, the official German historian of the *Flanderschlacht*.

“Not once does death unnerve him. He’s far too close to it for that.”

PASSCHENDAELE

CANADIAN MISGIVINGS

‘TAKE MY WORD FOR IT’

The first battle for Passchendaele had ended a dismal failure. With the year fading, with winter approaching, Haig was determined to take the village and the ridge it sat upon.

The Australians had failed. Perhaps Canadians might fare better. Perhaps they might, but their commander Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie doubted it.

Currie was an imposing figure with a bluntness proportionate to his size. Seizing Passchendaele would cost his corps 16,000 men, he predicted. Haig overruled his objections, telling the Canadian general and his staff: “Some day I hope to be able to tell you why this must be done, but in the meantime I ask you to take my word for it.”

The Canadians could not attack Passchendaele on their own. On the left wing of their assault, a British division would support the push: the 63rd Royal Naval Division.

The sailors were charged with advancing from the ruins of Wallemolen over 1,200 yards of boggy terrain which sloped gently upwards, crossed by a flooded beck, Paddebeek. On top of the high ground on the division’s right stood Tournant Farm, no longer a farm but the ruins of one turned into a German stronghold. Enemy pillboxes studded the land, mostly centred on the remnants of farm buildings.

After dark on Wednesday October 24, the men of the Royal Naval Division began to relieve the Scots of 9th Division. “There was no front to speak of,” recalled Richard Tobin, “just a series of posts scraped in the mud. A machine-gun crew here, a few riflemen there.”

There was no hope of receiving food or ammunition by day in these outposts – the German gunners would simply send a storm of steel raining down.

“When shells started dropping, you ran to the right or left to get some cover,” Tobin remembered. “If you were on the duckboards, you couldn’t run anywhere. You just had to face it and go on.”

Thursday was a fine, bright autumn day. The forecast for Friday, the twenty-sixth, looked promising. But in the small hours of October 26, the Flanders skies opened once more.

Großes Hauptquartier, Oktober 27. Westlicher Kriegsschauplatz:

Heeresgruppe Kronprinz Rupprecht

Franzosen und Engländer setzten gestern tagsüber auf dem Kampffeld in der Mitte der flandrischen Front von neuem starke Kräfte ein, um die Schlachtentscheidung zu suchen.

Der Erfolg blieb unser; vergeblich haben die feindlichen Divisionen sich in unserer Abwehrzone verblutet.

Gesteigerte Artilleriewirkung lag auf dem Kampfgelände, ehe der Feind zum Angriff schritt; hinter der sich vorwärtsschiebenden Feuerwalze brachen seine Sturmtruppen vor.

Nach hin- und herwogenden Kämpfen, die westlich von Passchendaele besonders erbittert waren, mußte sich der Feind mit wenigen Trichterlinien vor seiner Ausgangsstellung begnügen.

Teilkämpfe dauerten bis in die Nacht; das starke Feuer ließ nur vorübergehend nach.

Truppen aus allen Teilen des Reiches haben ruhmvollen Anteil an dem für uns günstigen Ausgang des Schlachttages!

– **Ludendorff, der Erste Generalquartiermeister**

It was still raining as whistles sounded along the line at 5.45 – long before dawn.

For two days the British guns had pummelled the German lines; the craters their shells left now filled with water.

“Between them,” wrote the Naval Division’s chronicler Douglas Jerrold, “a path had to be picked over ground only less impassable.”

But pick over the ground the Royal Naval Division did. On the left of its front, the Royal Marines Light Infantry struck, on the right the sailors of the Anson battalion.

Through the swirling rain, through the clouds of mud and dirt kicked up by shells impacting, through the smoke of rifle and machine-gun fire, the makeshift red banners of A Company, 2nd Royal Marines Light Infantry, bobbed and weaved over the battlefield.

The men rallied to them, exactly as Capt Peter Ligertwood had intended.

But Ligertwood himself was wounded, struck three times by enemy fire. Still he struggled to lead his company forward until a fourth wound left him prone in the mud.

The ground was raked by machine-gun and rifle fire, but Peter Ligertwood raised himself up once more.

He could go no further, but raised his arm and pointed. “There’s your objective, lads. Get it!”

With that he sank back into the mire as the red banners moved forward over the Ypres mud and across the Paddebeek. It was, wrote Douglas Jerrold, “one of the finest exploits” that fateful day.

But success on the left flank, and success on the right, where the Ansons had pushed forward and seized a strongpoint, counted for naught; the Germans in the centre of the RND’s front stood firm.

“From countless pill-boxes and redoubts, bullets rained like hail on our dauntless men,” wrote 30-year-old Surg Lt Geoffrey Sparrow.

By 8am, it was clear the attack was going nowhere. Not only was it going nowhere, but Arthur Asquith had little idea where his comrades were on the battlefield. But rather than send runners across the Flanders clay, Asquith set out himself to find the rest of his scattered division.

There are times in battle when the actions of an individual weigh more than the actions of the multitude. This was one such moment. Arthur Asquith moved over the battlefield in full view of the enemy for a good two hours, from crater to crater, with shells crashing down and machine-gun bullets slapping into the mud.

He covered the Royal Naval Division’s line “from end to end”, ensured the sailors finally linked up with the Canadians and prevented the confusion among the sailors and marines “getting out of hand”.

To clerk Thomas MacMillan watching the battle from headquarters, Arthur Asquith had “saved the situation”.

Behind the trenches, Australian troops moved up to the front line in trucks and buses. Neither spared the men from the elements. “Soaked and weary men heartily cursed the weather, the war and even their existence,” observed photographer Capt Frank Hurley. “The misery of it all is too terrible and appalling for words.”

By nightfall it was obvious to all that the attack had miscarried (the Canadians had failed to take Passchendaele), but the fighting was far from over: the Hoods and Hawkes held the line throughout the night and through most of the twenty-seventh.

No man was more conspicuous that Saturday than Surg Lt William McCracken. The Hood’s surgeon had spent the first day of battle tending to wounded in a forward first-aid post, close to the ruins of a farm, peppered by enemy shelling all day long.

When October 27 began, British wounded still littered the battlefield. McCracken led two platoons of stretcher-bearers through the mud towards the front line.

The party in khaki trudging through the mire soon drew the attention of the German gunners, who directed artillery and machine-gun fire at the surgeon. McCracken was undaunted. He fixed the Red Cross to his walking stick, raised it aloft and continued his advance. The German guns fell silent and for the rest of the morning William McCracken and his medics cared for the fallen well within range of enemy rifles.

McCracken, wrote Arthur Asquith admiringly, showed “contempt of danger”. His deeds that day served “to inspire all who have come in contact with him to emulate his splendid example”. Asquith recommended the surgeon for the Victoria Cross. The commander of the Hoods was also recommended for Britain’s highest military decoration. Neither recommendation succeeded.

‘GREAT IMPORTANCE’

‘A DAY OF HONOUR’

NO GREATER HEROISM

The men of the Royal Naval Division advanced no more than 500 yards along a front less than a mile long – ground, Douglas Haig told them, “of great importance”. Fifth Army commander Hubert Gough assured the sailors “no troops could have done more”, but privately the general had grave misgivings about the battle and above all the terrain it was being waged over.

“Men of the strongest physique could hardly move forward,” he later admitted. “Stumbling forward as best they could, their rifles soon became so caked and clogged with mud as to be useless.”

Gough, a cavalry man elevated far beyond his competence thanks to Haig’s patronage, wanted the battle called off – at least until the autumn frost hardened the ground. His master disagreed.

A few hundred yards from the sailor-soldiers, across the *Schlamm* (mud) of Flanders, the men of 164 *Infanterie* Regiment were counting their dead. The *Flanderschlacht* had cost the regiment nearly 1,800 officers and men. And yet they felt unbowed, unbeaten. To one *Hauptmann* (Captain) Heines, October 26 had been “a day of honour”. Heines had followed the battle from the regimental headquarters.

“I take my hat off to the simple *musketier*, who held out in the mud and rain – sometimes sunk

Supreme Headquarters, October 27
Western Theatre of War

Army Group Crown Prince Rupprecht

Yesterday French and English troops attacked in the centre of the Flanders front using fresh forces to force a decisive battle.

The success was ours; the enemy divisions **bled to death** in vain in our defensive zone.

Heavy artillery fire fell on the battlefield before the enemy attacked;

Increased artillery effect was on the combat area, before the enemy walked to the attack; stormtroops swarmed forward behind the advancing wall of fire...

After particularly bitter fighting west of Passchendaele which raged to and fro, the enemy had to be content with a few lines of craters in front of his jump-off positions...

Some fighting continued into the night; the heavy fire only lessened temporarily.

Troops from every corner of the Reich have played a glorious role in a day of battle which

ended in our favour!

– **Ludendorff, First General Quartermaster**

ORDER OF THE DAY

Please convey to all ranks engaged in today’s operations my very great appreciation of their gallant efforts.

They have my sincere sympathy, as **no troops could have had to face worse conditions of mud** than they had to face owing to the sudden downfall of rain this morning.

No troops could have done more than our men did today.

– **HUBERT GOUGH,
GOC FIFTH ARMY,
OCTOBER 26 1917**

in up to his waist – and endured. He is a true hero. There can be no greater heroism than this.”

Not every man in the Royal Naval Division was a sailor or Royal Marine. Of the three brigades which comprised the 63rd Division, one – 190th Brigade – consisted entirely of soldiers.

To date they had been saved from the Flanders battle, but Douglas Haig decreed they could be saved no longer. On the penultimate day of October 1917, the weary khaki figures of Second and Fifth Armies swarmed forward over the mud once more. The objective was identical to the one four days before: Passchendaele and the ridge it gave its name to.

And like four days before, the battle of October 30 was a failure.

Pte Alfred Burrage and his comrades in the Artists Rifles, one of the Army battalions in 190th Brigade, moved across the mud initially “as if we were on the parade ground”. The attack quickly began to falter as the riflemen stumbled towards the Paddebeek – no longer a brook, just an infernal bog.

“Shrapnel was bursting not much more than face high, and the liquid mud from ground shells was going up in the clouds and coming down in rain,” wrote Burrage.

The wounded gathered in small clusters, pitching their rifles in the mire as a signal to the stretcher-bearers. There was soon, Burrage recalled, “a forest of rifles” on the battlefield “until they were uprooted by shell bursts or knocked down by bullets like so many skittles.”

Sheltering in a shell-hole, the private looked across No Man’s Land to the German lines. Figures in *feldgrau* were leaping out of their trenches and heading for the rear. There was nothing the Artists Rifles could do. The mud forbade progress. It even forbade their rifles firing.

The British barrage was countered by the German barrage. The hellish symphony reached its climax that afternoon. It was more than Alfred Burrage could stand. He crouched in his foxhole crying: “Oh Christ, make it stop! Oh Jesus, make it stop! *It must* stop because I can’t bear it any more. I can’t bear it!”

For all its bravery and dash, the 190th Brigade achieved almost nothing on October 30, save for providing Death with his grim harvest; in some units the casualty rate reached 50 per cent. Only the Canadians felt some degree of success that night. They had forced their way on to the ridge and were barely 300 yards from what was left of Passchendaele.

To Douglas Haig it had all been “most successful”. Passchendaele “and the high ground round it” would soon be in Allied hands. In fact, he told London, he planned to

continue the battle “for several weeks yet”.

But if the battle was to go on “for several weeks yet” it could not go on as it was, warned Arthur Asquith. Each time the British Army attacked in the same old way... and was beaten back in the same old way.

Tommy always attacked at dawn. He was always given an objective impossible to attain in the Flanders mud.

Asquith suggested a new tactic. Small groups of well-trained, lightly-equipped troops should take out individual enemy strong points one-by-one, instead of sending a battalion across the mud to simply be cut-down by a wall of fire.

Asquith’s superiors agreed. The new tactic of ‘nibbling’ was put into practice during the first nights of November.

One-by-one, the German pillboxes around Wallemolen were picked off. At nightfall on the first day of November, one S/Lt Arthur Perry led around 50 men over the battlefield to neutralise a German strongpoint.

“In the darkness,” wrote Douglas Jerrold, “there was no danger from the enemy machine-guns – the situation was far too obscure for either side to risk firing without a target.”

The sailors surrounded the pillbox, tossed in grenades and took nine Germans prisoner, as well as leaving several enemy dead behind.

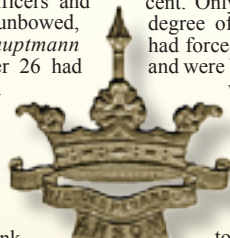
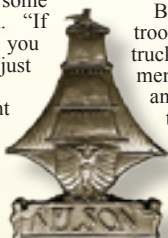
“This simple and almost bloodless operation” gained the Hawkes nearly 200 yards – ground the Royal Naval Division had twice tried to cross in daylight in vain.

The Germans were not, of course, going to permit the sailors to simply pick-off their Flanders fortifications willy-nilly. On November 3 they struck back against one stronghold seized two nights before.

At the heart of the defence of the nameless pillbox was, for want of a better word, a naval ‘character’.

Leading Seaman James Sherry could fight. He could fight Johnny Turk, as he had demonstrated in Gallipoli. He could fight Fritz too; he earned the Military Medal for leading a raid in Gavrelle, near Arras, in May. Unfortunately, James Sherry could also drink. A lot. He had been disrated for drunkenness behind the lines in 1916. On the eve of the Flanders attack his penchant for a tipple ended with a brawl with a Belgian inn owner – another disrating and a sentence of one year’s hard labour was imposed. With the Steadies about to go into battle, Sherry could not be spared, and on November 3 he and a small

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garrison were charged with holding on to a pillbox in the face of an assault by a German raiding party. The Hun charged the concrete island in the sea of mud, hurling *Stielhandgranate* – stick hand-grenades – inside, crippling Sherry. But the Hoods held on. James Sherry earned a bar to his Military Medal and was spared his sentence of hard labour.

By November 5, only one stronghold, the most potent one, Tournant Farm, remained in German hands. And it would remain so. For plans for the Royal Naval Division to storm it were abandoned and the sailor-soldiers headed to the rear. Their role at Ypres was ended.

The next day, Arthur Asquith visited his Hoods in the sickbay. “Our men were almost all knee-deep in mud and water throughout,” he recalled. Despite rubbing their feet with whale oil, the men suffered horrendously. Of the 78 men in the sickbay the day after the Hoods were finally pulled out of the line at Ypres, 70 were suffering from trench foot.

Capt Peter Ligertwood died in the Passchendaele mud. At least one of the flags he made for his company survived the battle.

Tattered, beaten by the weather and enemy alike, it was carried back to England where it was presented to Plymouth Division of the Royal Marines with appropriate ceremony.

“The flag was no more than a wisp of red bunting, faded and weather-strained, nailed to a 3ft stick, cut from the woods of France,” said Lt Col W P Drury, compiler of the *Globe & Laurel*.

“I doubt it would fetch more than a copper or two as a second-hand toy for a child – and yet I think the platoon flag is even more worthy of preservation than the Corps Colours. “I hope that little platoon flag which inspired the men in Flanders may fill future generations of Royal Marines with pride for their great Corps, whose tradition cannot be touched by any other regiment.”

Arthur Asquith was promoted to command 189th Brigade within six weeks of the battle. His tenure was short-lived. Two days later he was shot in the left ankle by a German shell.

The wound never healed, Asquith lost his leg below the knee and never fought in France again.

THE BATTLE DONE

THE BUTCHER’S BILL

‘THE GREATEST MARTYRDOM’

The Royal Naval Division’s Battle of Third Ypres was over, but the Passchendaele mincing machine ground on for another week or so. Passchendaele was taken. So too the ridge it sat upon. It cost the Canadian Expeditionary Force 16,000 casualties – exactly as Arthur Currie had predicted. The entire offensive added the names of 245,000 from the Commonwealth armies to the roll call of dead and wounded. And the foe? Best estimates suggest 180,000 *landers* perished or were wounded during the *Flandernschlacht*.

Passchendaele, however, cannot be measured in ground gained, or even lives lost. Passchendaele cost the soldier, friend and foe alike, his soul.

Twelve months before the German Army had struck at Verdun hoping to bleed France white; it had almost

bled itself white in the process.

In the autumn of 1917 Douglas Haig had blunted the knife of the German Army. But in doing so he scarred the British Army – and the nation – with wounds physical and psychological which haunt it to this day.

“For the first time the British Army lost its spirit of optimism, and there was a sense of deadly depression among many officers and men with whom I came in touch,” wrote *Times* correspondent Sir Philip Gibbs, the leading war correspondent of the day.

Even Haig’s loyal and, at times, overly-optimistic intelligence chief, John Charteris, questioned the wisdom of Passchendaele. It was, he wrote, “a rather barren victory.” ‘Barren’ was not a word Basil Rackham used. Or ‘victory’ for that matter. “Passchendaele,” the adjutant of Hawke Battalion recalled years later “was inhuman. I don’t often talk about my experiences in World War I, but whenever I do I always say that there was nothing so dreadful as Passchendaele.”

On November 14, Rudolf Binding headed up to the German front line at Passchendaele. The visit shocked him. “Many of the men can hardly speak. You see wild eyes gazing out of faces which are no longer human,” he wrote. “One cannot say that morale is low or weak. Regiments simply show a sort of staggering and faltering – as people do who have made unheard-of efforts.”

A German artillery officer and his comrades left the Flanders front by cart “down flooded streets, past devastated fields, past farms reduced to ruins”. He continued:

“Other troops move from one battle to the next, from one victory to the next, earning fame and glory, getting to know the land and its people, and we’ve been stuck here in Flanders since the end of 1914, apart from a brief spell on the Somme. Of course, times here have changed completely, we’ve endured bitter times, but who knows about it? Virtually no-one. Just lying idle, defying the storms, observing no visible success – that gnaws at your nerves.”

Who sings the song of the soldier in the Flanders battle? mused Werner Beumelberg, soldier turned official historian of the *Flandernschlacht*.

Not the military communiques which became embarrassing in seeking fresh words of praise and homage.

Not the medals with which the survivors are generously decorated.

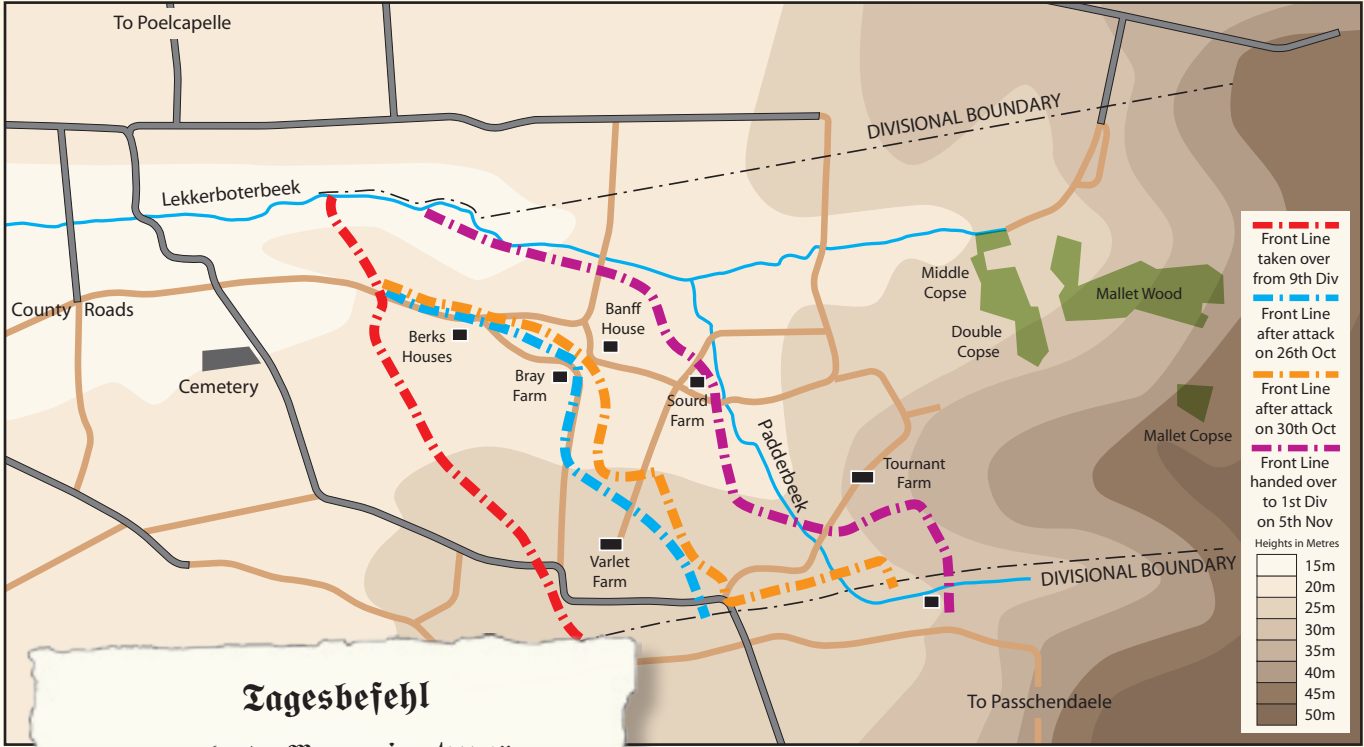
Not the memorials which are erected to the fallen.

It is a completely silent, hidden affair in the heart. Reverence, a melancholy mourning, trembling, the chattering of teeth, and a prayer.

To *General der Infanterie* Hermann von Kuhl, Chief-of-Staff of the army group defending Flanders, Passchendaele was “the greatest martyrdom of the war”, martyrdom which inflicted irreparable harm upon the Kaiser’s Army. “The sharp edge of the German sword had become jagged.”

Having shed so much blood to capture Passchendaele ridge and the surrounding boggy wasteland, Haig’s headquarters now decided it was terrain “unsuitable” for defence should the Germans attacked in strength.

If the land was unsuitable, what point the battle? Douglas Haig put it simply: to prevent the French



Tagesbefehl

Trotz des unerhörten Masseneinsatzes an Menschen und Material hat der Feind nichts erreicht. Ein schmales, gänzlich zerstörtes Trichterfeld ist sein ganzer Gewinn. Er hat diesen Gewinn mit ausserordentlich hohen Verlusten erkauf, während unsere Verluste weit geringer waren als in jeder bisherigen Abwehrschlacht

So ist die Schlacht in Flandern eine schwere Niederlage für den Gegner, für uns ein grosser Sieg. Wer dabei war, kann stolz darauf sein, ein Flandernkämpfer zu sein.

Jedem einzelnen Kämpfer ist der Dank des Vaterlandes sicher. Nur dadurch, dass unsere Front in Flandern jedem Ansturm trotzte, ist es für die oberste Führung möglich gewesen, im Osten gegen die Russen, im Süden gegen die Italiener gewaltige Schläge zu führen.

– Rupprecht von Bayern, Kronprinz Oberbefehlshaber der Heeresgruppe Rupprecht

Army “breaking up”, to spare it having to bear the burden of the war after mutinies had rocked it during the spring, and, above, all to kill Germans.

To John Jellicoe he had promised an offensive against the U-boat bases. To Lloyd George he had promised an offensive to achieve the same – and perhaps deliver a mortal blow to the foe.

In the end he delivered neither. The amphibious assault on the Belgian coast and the drive on Bruges had been abandoned long before the fighting in Flanders ceased.

As for the mortal blow, the German lines bent and bowed, but did not break.

Still, John Charteris juggled his figures. It seemed as if the Germans only had 300,000 men left to replace those lost on the Western Front; the British Army’s camps would send 637,000 fresh Tommies for the 1918 campaign.

And so, John Charteris decided, Passchendaele had been a victory. “We have beaten the Germans nearly to breaking point,” he wrote in his diary.

“If we keep all our strength in the West we must win next year. If we distribute it, we may still be fighting

in 1919 or even 1920.”

Erich Ludendorff, the gruff, dour *de facto* Commander-in-Chief of the German Army also pored over the figures.

The Reich could not afford to wage such defensive battles in men or matériel. And it was sapping the men’s morale. “The troops longed for a war of movement,” he wrote. “The Army pined for the offensive.”

On November 11, the day after Douglas Haig brought the curtain down on his offensive in Flanders, Ludendorff and his commanders met in the Belgian town of Mons. There they took a fateful decision. They would win the war. They would strike in the West as soon as possible.

And the beasts in their lair? Well, they were still there.

By the autumn of 1917 the ‘submarine peril’ had faded. Convoys had starved the U-boats of rich pickings on the high seas.

But still German submarines and destroyers sailed with near impunity from their lair in Bruges, through the canals, into the North Sea via Zeebrugge and Ostend.

Douglas Haig had failed to trap the beasts in their lair.

The Navy would do it alone.

Order of the Day

Despite the unprecedented use of men and matériel, the enemy has achieved nothing. All he has gained is a thin, utterly destroyed **field of craters**. And he has paid for this gain with exceptionally heavy losses, while our losses were far lower than in any of our other recent defensive battles.

And so the battle in Flanders is a **heavy defeat for the enemy** – and for us it is a great victory. Whoever was there can be proud to have been a Flanders warrior.

Every single soldier is assured of the gratitude of the Fatherland. It was only because our front in Flanders thwarted every attack that the Supreme Command was able to deal powerful blows in the East against the Russians and in the south against the Italians.

– Rupprecht of Bavaria, Crown Prince Commander-in-Chief, Army Group Rupprecht

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Compiled by Richard Hargreaves. With thanks to Capt Christopher Page and the team at the Naval Historical Branch whose knowledge of the Royal Naval Division is unparalleled, and to Donald Ligertwood for details of his great uncle’s deeds.

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● *Dead horses and smashed limbers on the approaches to a German position at Passchendaele*

